CHRISTMAS NUMBER

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

In 1729
this paper was purchased by Benjamin Franklin and published by him as "The Pennsylvania Gazette" until
1765
when it passed into other hands. The title was changed to "The Saturday Evening Post" on August 4.

Founded A.D. 1728

PHILADELPHIA, DECEMBER 24, 1898

Volume 171
Number 26

5 cents a copy
$2.50 a Year

1821
and the office of publication was the one formerly occupied by Benjamin Franklin, in the rear of 53 Market St., Philadelphia. In the year
1897
it became the property of the present publishers,
THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY

Copyright, 1898, by The Curtis Publishing Company

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AT 421 ARCH STREET

Entered at the Philadelphia Post-Office as Second-Class Matter

Under The Mistletoe.

An English Christmas Story.

By Edith Nesbit.

Pictures By C.D. Williams.

First Chapter

"IT'S no good. I can't marry him, and I won't! We have enough to live on, mummie dear, without my marrying a horrid old man."

Delia Nugent threw down her hair-brush with such violence that it bounded from the dressing-table to the floor, and her mother started and trembled. Her nerves were weakened by long illness. Delia knew it; literally she moved like a mouse.

"My income dies with me," said the invalid's soft voice from among the white shawls in the easy-chair, "and Colonel Raymond is not old,—he cannot be forty yet. I remember him as a youth. At that time he was not at all horrid; he was quite handsome, and had very pretty manners, my dear."

•

"I dare say." Delia picked up the white silk stockings from the bed and swung them round and round. "He may have been nice then, when he was young, but now he's old and horrid. Why, he was a man at Oxford when I was choking myself with the coral and bells his father gave me for a christening present! Bah! I've no patience with the people who make such wills. It's wicked; it's horrible; it's unnatural! Now, mummie darling, let me help you to your room, and send Slater to you. It's too late for little mothers to be sitting up. I'll promise to see him, but I can't promise to do more than that."

"It's for your sake, my pet," the mother answered as she rose wearily, leaning on the strong, young arm that supported her to her room. "I should die more easily if I knew your future was secure."

"You're not going to die, my precious precious," the girl answered cheerfully; but she bit her lip to keep back the sudden tears. "You're going to live and get real well once more. That's what we came to the Riviera for, you know, my dearest."

•

When Miss Nugent came back to her room she finished her toilette rapidly. It was a pretty vision that showed in the long mirror,—bright, fair hair, and a mutinous, charming face. When the white, transparent gown was on, the pearls round the pretty white neck, the flowers adjusted on the slender figure, it was a vision that might have turned a hundred heads in a single evening, and none could have been astonished at the sudden turning.

The Nugents were staying in a quiet town some six miles from Cannes. To-night, Delia was to be taken to a grand reception, where she was to meet the man whom fate and her godfather had designed for her husband. The situation as set forth in old Mr. Raymond's will was simplicity itself. If Delia married Colonel Raymond, half the old man's fortune was hers and half Colonel Raymond's; if not, her share and half his went to the Society for the Free Distribution of India-Rubber Shoes Among the Natives of the African Swamps. While Delia was cowering among her white furs in the carriage on the way to Lady Denbigh's, where she was to dine and then attend the reception, a sudden thought struck her.

•

She sat motionless during her six-mile drive, and, as the carriage door opened, she sprang out with a firm step, and a face alight with a new resolve. Lady Denbigh was her old school friend, newly married, and married, as it happened, to a man who had been Colonel Raymond's college chum.

At dinner, Delia was *distraite;* she questioned and answered perfunctorily. The only question in answer to which she took an interest was whether Colonel Raymond was to call for her party or meet it at the Duchess' "At-Home." Colonel Raymond, it seemed, would call.

When the after-dinner moment came, Delia, alone with her hostess, caught her by the hands and called her her only friend and her dearest dear.

Lady Denbigh laughed, and Delia unfolded her plan,—her great idea.

•

When Lord Denbigh joined them his wife was in convulsions of laughter in a great armchair, and Delia was standing on the hearth-rug looking earnestly in the mirror.

"We ought to be starting, my dear," he said. "What is this supreme, this ineffable joke which you are enjoying?"

"I'll tell you as we go along," his wife answered. "Delia isn't coming with us, so we won't stay long. We're coming back to fetch her, and then we'll go to the masked ball at the Casino des Fleurs. Delia has never been to a masked ball."

"But Raymond?" he said.

Delia blushed and stamped her foot. "Don't be detestable," she said, smiling at him. "Do as your pretty lady tells you."

LADY DENBIGH LAUGHED, AND DELIA UNFOLDED HER PLAN,—HER GREAT IDEA

"*Mademoiselle à raison,*" he answered, and offered his arm to his wife.

"We will take Colonel Raymond with us, of course," said Lady Denbigh rising. "Good-by, Miss White-gown! Try to amuse yourself until we return for you."

When Delia found herself alone she looked once more in the glass, and once more laughed softly to herself. Then she ran upstairs, two steps at a time, and rang for Lady Denbigh's maid to come to her.

• • •

Second Chapter

LORD and Lady Denbigh drove up to the Casino des Fleurs and set foot on the red carpet of its steps. Their figures were shrouded in dominoes, and a third shrouded figure was with them. All three wore little black velvet masks. A fourth masked figure advanced to meet them,—a figure round whose broad shoulders the ready-made domino, hastily bought, refused to meet. The white shirt-front and the black cloth showed plainly beneath.

"Colonel Raymond, let me present you to Miss Nugent," whispered Lady Denbigh. "Now, nobody has any names,—only you'll know us because my domino is green,—which these French people abhor,—and Miss Nugent's is black, with silver lions on it. They're the English Royal arms lions, so your loyalty insures your knowing them anywhere."

The party went slowly up the broad, red-carpeted stairs. Groups of masked dancers, gathered about the doors, stared as they passed.

"*C'est donc vous, madame?*" said a perfect stranger as Delia passed.

•

Lady Denbigh answered gayly:

"*Vous la reconnaissez donc? Et moi que me fait a ces lions pour vous intriguer!*"

Colonel Raymond frowned under the mask.

"I have never been to a masked ball before," he said to his companion. "Have you?"

"Oh, yes," said the lady with the silver lions, "dozens,—thousands; I—I almost live at masked balls, don't you know."

•

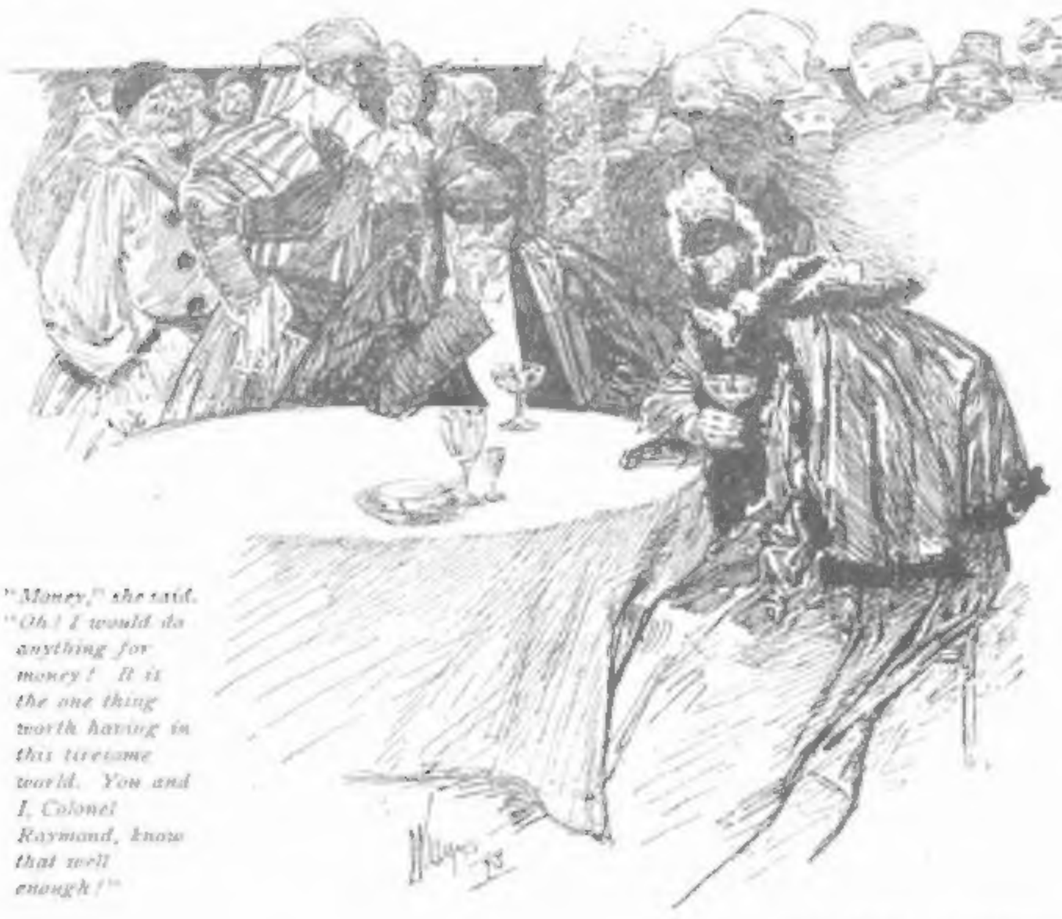
She had pitched her voice half a dozen notes above its own sweet, low key, and spoke in a sharp, thin staccato. Lady Denbigh pinched her husband's arm and laughed.

"She is a born actress. She is acting well."

"I wish she hadn't done it," he rejoined. "Raymond is a good sort. It seems hardly fair."

"He's half a lifetime older than she is," rejoined Lord Denbigh's wife, holding her husband's arm very tight. There was a difference of eight months in the ages of Lord and Lady Denbigh.

The great ballroom was crowded. Monks and clowns, fisher-girls and shepherdesses, Queens of Hearts, brigands, Kings, Queens, and dominoes innumerable thronged the



"Money," she said. "Oh! I would do anything for money! It is the one thing worth having in this tiresome world. You and I, Colonel Raymond, know that well enough!"

space under the galleries. The smooth floor, bare but for the passing of here and there a stray couple, gleamed invitingly. The band broke into a waltz. Delia and her escort made two steps forward and glided into the measure of it. Not a word was spoken till the last chord of the waltz crashed a heavy *finis* across the page of warm, pulsating life.

Delia turned to her partner.

"You can waltz," she said abruptly, and Raymond, lifting his eyebrows under the black mask, replied: "You do me too much honor!"

The most amusing thing about a masked ball is that you may dance as many times as you like with one person. Delia danced fourteen times with Colonel Raymond. Lord and Lady Denbigh had been married for three months, and, being singularly constant people, they still enjoyed waltzing with each other more than waltzing with other people.

"We are doing them a kindness," said Delia, in the high-pitched voice, "by dancing so much together. It leaves them free,—the dear, silly things!"

"Do you think it silly," he asked, "to prefer dancing with your wife to dancing with any one else?"

"Absurd!" Delia laughed noisily, but the laugh did not ring quite true.

•

In the high, shrill voice she had chosen, Delia chattered to her cavalier of all things in heaven and earth; and of all things she spoke flippantly, irreverently, and, when she could remember to do it, with silly irrationality. Her companion grew more and more silent. In his mind a growing conviction thrust out small talk. Every now and then he found himself making phrases about Miss Nugent. "Commonplace as cabbage; vulgar as a pork-butcher's daughter; flippant, frivolous, a flirt"; and he grew more and more certain that this Miss Nugent, whom his father had desired him to marry, was intolerable.

"Money," she said, as they sat sipping pink "grenadines" on the veranda, and looking out on the many-colored lights of the illuminated gardens. "Oh! I would do anything for money! It is the one thing worth having in this tiresome world. You and I, Colonel Raymond, know that well enough!" She forced a shrill titter. It was her crowning stroke. It took effect.

"You should speak for yourself, Miss Nugent," he said sternly. And Delia, in the hot hiding of her mask, hugged herself for her cunning. "He would not marry me now," she thought, "though it cost him 'the half of his Kingdom.'"

Then she felt secure, and left the talk to him. And presently a little chill fell on her; for, cold and formal as his talk was, it was not the talk of a fool or a dotard. Again and again she found him voicing sentiments which she could have echoed, and the severity, the quiet power of the man awed and, at the same time, charmed her. Round them the crowd of merrymakers surged and flowed and ebbed. The time for unmasking drew near, and Delia trembled a little.

"It would have been enough without that!" she thought bitterly, seeing the stern set of the man's lips below the mask.

The signal to unmask came at supper. Lady Denbigh's sweet, flushed face appeared from behind the black velvet; then her husband's jolly, laughing eyes. Then Raymond, after the hesitation of a moment, loosed the strings of his mask. He laid it on the table, and Delia looked on the face of the "horrid old man." She saw a strong face, a face in the prime of manhood, bronzed by the Eastern sun, a pair of good blue eyes, straight, well-cut features, and the mouth she had watched all the evening, stern in repose, yet softening to a singular sweetness as he turned to answer some gentle frivolity of Lady Denbigh.

Several young French officers, attracted by the grace of outline which Delia's domino had been powerless to disguise, were hovering near, awaiting the revelation which her unmasking should afford.

•

"Come, Delia," said Lady Denbigh. "You'll be glad to get that hot mask off. Remember, I've not seen your face since dinner."

Delia drew a long breath, and suddenly tore off the mask. Her friend only just managed to suppress a little cry, or rather she could not suppress it, but she turned it, at the last moment, into a cough, as a clever dressmaker will turn an ill-fitting bodice into a zouave.

Delia let the hood of her domino fall back as she removed the mask, and the watchful young Frenchmen saw a dark head, crowned with black hair, coarse, ill-arranged, a swarthy face and neck, eyebrows thick and black as garden slugs, and a mouth straight, hard, and much too red. The hair was parted in the middle, and strained tightly back above the ears,—little shell-pink ears which Delia had never thought of disguising. Her eyes, too; they flashed clear hazel fire at the young Lieutenant, who exclaimed audibly: "*Mais oui,—les Anglaises sont toutes laides à faire peur. Il n'y a que les yeux.*"

"*Et les oreilles,*" added a Captain, more observant.

Delia pulled the hood of her domino over the black hair and laughed.

The Frenchmen turned away. Delia surprised herself in a sigh. When, ever since you can remember, people have turned round to look at you in the street because you were so pretty, it comes somewhat as a shock when eyes pass over you, and turn away, indifferent,—condemnatory even. After the unmasking, Colonel Raymond was more polite than before. Lord and Lady Denbigh were in the highest spirits. Delia laughed a good deal.

•

When she was tucked up in her carriage among her white furs she began to cry. She cried all the way home. The basket on the front seat, which held her pretty tulle ball-dress, jolted forward on her knees, and hurt her. She pushed it back angrily, and cried more than ever.

When she reached home the pink sunrise glory was flashing the Alpes Maritimes. She tore off her domino and scrubbed her face and neck till its own fairness reappeared. Then she slipped on a lace-trimmed wrapper and crept in to see if her mother was asleep.

Mrs. Nugent was not asleep. So Delia sat down by her bed, and told her how much she had enjoyed herself.

"But I was quite right about Colonel Raymond. He is detestable," she said.

"You look flushed," said the mother anxiously, "and your eyes,—what have you been doing to them?"

"It was the sunrise," said Delia, stooping to kiss her mother tenderly, so that her face was hidden in the shadow. "It shone in my eyes all the way home."

• • •

Third Chapter

THE rosy flush of sunrise had died away, but the freshness of early morning still lay on the land, pure as the memories of childhood.

Colonel Raymond, lounging at ease among the myrtle and lentiscus bushes on the rocky coast, the dark pine woods behind him, and before him the diamond-set sapphire of the Mediterranean, was suddenly aware of a human presence breaking the charm of the morning's perfect stillness. The masked ball, and his meeting with the bride, the dark browed, shrill-tongued bride whom his father had chosen for him, had left him sleepless. He had tossed through a restless hour, and then, through the pink glow of the sunrise, had wandered out along the Nice road, past the white sands and darkling fir trees of Jean de Pins, and so, through the dusky orchards and by sleeping villas, to the wild eastern side of the Cap d'Antibes. And there he rested, reflecting on many things; there, too, he met his fate.

A girl in a gown of bright dark blue,—the color of a peacock where he is bluest,—came along the rugged path between the myrtles. Her hair shone like gold in the new sunlight, her hat hung in her hand,—a large white hat. She had stuck pink roses in its broad ribbon, and she came toward him, unconscious of his presence, swinging the hat by its white strings, and singing:

"An' ye are the laddie that gave me the penny,
The lad that I'll lo'e till the day that I dee."

Her voice was soft and singularly sweet. Colonel Raymond jumped up from his lentiscus bush; the girl saw him, stopped singing, passed him, and as she passed she bowed. He raised his hat mechanically.

•

He stood looking after her. She knew him, then! And he,—could he possibly have seen her before and forgotten her? That bright hair; that charming profile,—No; he could never have forgotten these; and yet there was something familiar——

Colonel Raymond was a man of action. He made six strides and caught up with her.

"I did not recognize you for the moment," he said abruptly.

She raised laughing eyes to his.

"And do you recognize me now?" she asked. "No; don't begin to try to get out of it; you had forgotten me. My name is Carmichael" (so it was,—Delia Carmichael Nugent), "and we have danced together once or twice, Colonel Raymond."

The spell of the morning was working in his blood, and with it the spell of her bright beauty.

"If I might—— Might I walk with you, Miss Carmichael?" he asked wistfully. And together they passed on among the myrtles and the gray rocks.

•

That morning is marked in Colonel Raymond's memory with the whitest of white stones. She walked with him, she talked to him, in the lowest, most delightful voice in the world, of all things in heaven and earth; talked gently, gayly, reverently, and always charmingly. She opened the storehouse of her mind for him, and let him see, in brief, bewildering flashes, glimpses of the treasure-house of her soul.

Of her heart he saw nothing on that morning. That came a fortnight later, when he strode through the pine woods, by the white sand and through the dewy orchards, by the sleeping villas, to bid her good-by. They had met every day since that first day, at first by chance,—a chance tutored by Delia, afterward by design; a design formed and carried out by Raymond,—lastly by an unspoken agreement more dear than either.

They sat on a fallen olive tree, amid the deep grass that gleamed wet with dew, and transfigured in the morning's level light. And——

"I am going away to-morrow," he said.

She only turned her eyes and looked straight in his.

He drew a quick breath. She looked at him steadily, and two large tears gathered in her eyes, slid over the soft lashes, and fell on the hands crossed in her lap.

"Then you do care," he cried quickly,—incredulously almost,—but his arms went round her.

"Why must you go?" she asked presently.

"Because my father desired me to keep this Christmas at our own house. There is a girl,—he wished me to marry her,—and he wished me to entertain her and her mother at this season."

"Is there any condition attached to your marrying her?"

He laughed: "Nothing serious," he said. "I lose a little money if I don't. And so does she. That's the worst of it. But I couldn't——oh, my dear. But I shall make it up to her in some other way."

•

The girl opened her lips to speak. Then she closed them sharply, and lifted them to his to be kissed.

"My father," he went on, "once loved this girl's mother, and he wished,—but it couldn't be, and if he knows now he will understand. He wished me to marry her, and,—he loved old customs; he wished me to lead her out before the tenants on Christmas Day, and kiss her under the mistletoe, as a sign that,—it sounds silly, doesn't it?"

"No," she said, looking out through the gray green of the olives; "it sounds very pretty,—if you had loved her."

"Ah—if! But it is you I love. I only met her once. I think she loathed me almost as much as I detested her."

Delia's heart gave a throb, half joy, half pain.

"Poor girl," she said gently.

Raymond laughed low and kissed her smooth cheek.

•

"Oh, love," he said, "it is too hard,—to win you, and then to leave you! But in the very earliest of the New Year I shall come back, and then——"

"Will you kiss me when you see me again?" asked Delia suddenly, looking earnestly at him, "wherever it is?"

"If you will,—if you are gracious enough to permit me to——"

"It's a promise," she said, and they strolled through the orchard toward their parting.

• • •

Fourth Chapter

ALL the tenants were gathered together for the merrymaking on Christmas Eve. Over the last Christmas the shadow of death had lain thick and heavy, but this year the old hall was hung with garlands of evergreen,—holly, yew and laurel,—and every window ablaze with light.

Raymond was nervously picturing his meeting with the shrill-voiced, black-haired lady whom his father's last wishes had

"I am going away to-morrow," he said

designed for him, and the thought of the golden-haired girl who had won his heart among the olive gardens only comforted him by moments. The situation was, at best, an unfortunate one. Miss Nugent had arrived late,—too late for dinner; he should see her first in the ballroom, among the tenants. They all of them must know of the terms of his father's will. What whisperings and nudgings, what sly smiles, what covert jests——

He shuddered, and his other guests found him an absent-minded, albeit a courteous, host. Lord and Lady Denbigh alone seemed not to notice his abstraction. The moment was nearing. Raymond grew more and more nervous. He turned to his old college chum, Lord Denbigh, for support.

•

"Beastly nuisance, I know," said the peer cheerfully; "still you must go through with it,—some way."

The ballroom was crowded. Only in the middle, where the great bough of gray-green mistletoe swung from the hundred-lighted crystal chandelier, was an empty space. The color of the mistletoe reminded Raymond of the olive gardens. He passed from group to group, talking to old men who had known him as a boy, and to young men whom he had known as boys, when he and they went a-rabbiting together in his father's woods, many a good year ago.

Suddenly there was a stir near the door. Raymond turned, to see Lady Denbigh glide forward into the empty lighted space in the middle of the room. With her came a girl in white, a girl with golden hair and eyes that shone,—his maid of the olives and the sunrise.

He made three steps forward.

"Your promise," she whispered; "your promise."

He stooped as she stood beneath the mistletoe, and kissed her upturned face.

Then rose a storm of deafening cheers from the tenants. Through it all he felt her hand in his, and heard as in a dream Lady Denbigh's voice saying, "Curtain! Curtain! This is Delia Nugent. Oh, what a charming end to the comedy! Curtain!"

•

A few hours later he and she stood alone before the fire in the great hall. Mrs. Nugent, tired with travel and happiness, had retired on Lady Denbigh's arm. Lord Denbigh had suddenly experienced that strange longing which only a good cigar can assuage. The two were alone, and she had told him everything.

"You do forgive me, don't you?" she urged, clinging to his arm. "I do so love play-acting, and I thought you were a horrid old man, and I didn't want you to like me; only, as soon as I saw you I knew——"

"And did you mean to meet me the next day?" he questioned, stroking her soft hair.

She flashed indignant denial at him.

"You know I didn't! Not that morning, and everything, was entirely your doing."

"You didn't wish me to like you then,—that first morning,—when we met among the myrtles?"

"Of course not," she answered, but she hid her face.

"Perhaps," he went on, laughing a little for pure happiness, and turning her face till her eyes met his, "perhaps you don't wish me to like you now?"

"Of course not," she answered lightly. Then, as her eyes met his, she hid her face again on his shoulder.

•

"And so all ends happily," he went on, holding her closely, "and we both have our fortunes, and——"

"Ah, don't," she cried, "as if the fortune mattered! I'm glad of it, though,—because my mother is glad. But as for you and me! Oh, my dear! I am glad you loved me when you thought I was losing you a fortune, instead of bringing you one. It will be something to hold to my heart all my life long."

"And as for my heart," he answered, "it is you I shall hold to my heart all my life long,—all our happy lives long, my darling!"

The hall clock had struck the hour, and from beyond the park, across the frozen snow, came the sweet jingle of the Christmas bells.

She turned sweet, wet eyes on him.

"I don't deserve to be so happy," she said, "and God is very good to me!"

So-called advertising agents, so-called journalists, so-called "men of influence in the city"

THE MARKET-PLACE

By

HAROLD FREDERIC

with Pictures by Harrison Fisher

Chapter II

"LOUISA, the long and short of it is this," said Thorpe, half an hour later, "you never did believe in me as a sister should do."

He was seated alone with his sister, in a small, low, rather dismally appointed room, half heartedly lighted by two flickering gas-jets. They sat somewhat apart, confronting a fireplace, where only the laid materials for a fire disclosed themselves in the cold grate. Above the mantel hung an enlarged photograph of a scowling old man.

Thorpe's gaze recurred automatically at brief intervals to this portrait,—which somehow produced the effect upon him of responsibility for the cheerlessness of the room. There were other pictures on the walls of which he was dimly conscious,—faded old prints about Dido and Æneas and Agamemnon, which seemed to come back to him out of the mists of childhood.

Vagrant impressions and associations of this childhood strayed with quaint inconsequence across the field of his preoccupied mind. The peculiar odor of the ancient book shop on the floor below remained like snuff in his nostrils. Somewhere underneath, or in the wainscoting at the side, he could hear the assiduous gnawing of a rat. Was it the same rat, he wondered with a mental grin, that used to keep him awake nights, in one of the rooms next to this, with that same foolish noise, when he was a boy?

•

"I know you always say that," replied Louisa impassively.

She was years older than her brother, but, without a trace of artifice or intention, contrived to look the younger of the two. Her thick hair, drawn simply from her temples into a knot behind, was of that palest brown which assimilates gray. Her face, long, plain, masculine in contour and spirit, conveyed no message as to years. Long and spare of figure, she sat upright in her chair, with her large, capable hands on her knees.

"I believed in you as much as you'd let me," she went on, indifferently, almost wearily. "But I don't see that it mattered to you whether I did or didn't. You went your own way; you did what you wanted to do. What had I to do with it? I don't suppose I even knew what part of the world you were in more than once in two or three years. How should I know whether you were going to succeed, when I didn't even know what it was you were at? Certainly you hadn't succeeded here in London,—but elsewhere you might or you might not,—how could I tell?

•

"And, moreover, I don't feel that I know you very well; you've grown into something very different from the boy Joel that left the shop,—it must be twenty years ago. I can only know about you and your affairs what you tell me."

"But my point is," pursued Thorpe, watching her face with a curiously intent glance, "you never said to yourself: 'I know he's going to succeed. I know he'll be a rich man before he dies.'"

She shook her head dispassionately. Her manner expressed fatigued failure to comprehend why he was making so much of this purposeless point.

"No,—I don't remember ever having said that to myself," she admitted listlessly. Then a comment upon his words occurred to her, and she spoke with more animation: "You don't seem to understand, Joel, that what was very important to you didn't occupy me at all. You were always talking about getting rich; you kept the idea before you of some time, at a stroke, finding yourself a millionaire. That's been the idea of your life.

"But what do I know about all that? My work has been to keep a roof over my head,—to keep the little business from disappearing altogether. It's been hard enough, I can tell you, these last few years, with the big jobbers cutting the hearts out of the small traders. I had the invalid husband to support for between three and four years,—a dead weight on me every week,—and then the children to look after, to clothe and educate."

At the last word she hesitated suddenly, and looked at him. "Don't think I'm ungrateful," she went on, with a troubled effort at a smile, "but I almost wish you'd never sent me that four hundred pounds at all. What it means is that they've had two years at schools where now I sha'n't be able to keep them any longer. They'll be spoiled for my kind of life, and they won't have a fair chance for any other. I don't know what will become of them."

The profound apprehension in the mother's voice did not dull the gleam in Thorpe's eyes. He even began a smile in the shadows of his unkempt mustache as he looked at her.

"But when I sent you that money, for example, two years ago, and over," he persisted doggedly, "and I told you there'd be more where that came from, and that I stood to pull off the great event,—even then, now, you didn't believe in your innermost heart that I knew what I was talking about, did you?"

She frowned with impatience as she turned toward him. "For Heaven's sake, Joel," she said sharply, "you become a bore with that stupid nonsense. I want to be patient with you,—I do, indeed, sympathize with you in your misfortunes,—you know that well enough,—but you're very tiresome with that eternal harping on what I believed and what I didn't believe. Now, are you going to stop to supper or not? Because, if you are, I must send the maid out. And there's another thing,—would it be of any help to you to bring your things here from the hotel? You can have Alfred's room as well as not,—till Christmas, at least."

•

"Supposing I couldn't get my luggage out of the hotel till I'd settled my bill," suggested Thorpe tentatively, in a muffled voice.

The practical woman reflected for an instant. "I was thinking," she confessed then, "that it might be cheaper to leave your things there, and buy what little you want,—I don't imagine from what I've seen that your wardrobe is so very valuable,—but, no; I suppose the bill ought to be paid. Perhaps it can be managed. How much will it be?"

Thorpe musingly rose to his feet, and strolled over to her chair. With his thick hands on his sister's shoulders, he stooped and kissed her on the forehead.

"You believe in me now, anyway, eh, Lou?" he said, as he straightened himself behind her.

The unaccustomed caress,—so different in character from the perfunctory salute with which he had greeted her on his arrival from foreign parts, six months before,—brought a flush of pleased surprise to her plain face. Then a kind of bewilderment crept into the abstracted gaze she was bending upon the fireless grate. Something extraordinary, unaccountable, was in the manner of her brother.

She recalled that, in truth, he was more than half a stranger to her. How could she tell what wild, uncanny second nature had not grown up in him under those outlandish tropical skies? He had just told her that his ruin was absolute,—overwhelming,—yet there had been a covert smile in the recesses of his glance. Even now, she half felt, half heard a chuckle from him as he stood by her.

The swift thought that disaster had shaken his brain loomed up and possessed her. She flung herself out of the chair, and, wheeling, seized its back and drew it between them as she faced him. It was with a stare of frank dismay that she beheld him grinning at her.

"What——" she began stammering, "what is the matter, Joel?"

A sleek old braggart of a company-promoter

He permitted himself the luxury of smiling blankly at her for a further moment. Then he tossed his head and laughed abruptly.

"Sit down, old girl," he adjured her. "Try and hold yourself together, now,—to hear some different kind of news. I've been playing it rather low down on you, for a fact. Instead of my being smashed, it's the other way about."

She continued to confront him, with a nervous clasp upon the chair back. Her breathing troubled her as she regarded him, and tried to take in the meaning of his words.

"Do you mean—you've been lying to me about—about your company?" she asked confusedly.

"No, no; not at all," he replied, now all genial heartiness. "No; what I told you was gospel truth,—but I was taking a rise out of you all the same."

He seemed so unaffectedly pleased by his achievement in kindly duplicity that she forced an awkward smile to her lips.

"I don't understand in the least," she said, striving to remember what he had told her. "What you said was that the public had entirely failed to come in,—that there weren't enough applications for shares to pay flotation expenses,—those were your own words. Of course, I don't pretend to understand these city matters; but it is the case, isn't it, that if people don't subscribe for the shares of a new company, then the company is a failure?"

"Yes, that may be said to be the case,—as a general rule," he nodded at her, still beaming.

•

"Well, then,—of course, I don't understand," she owned.

"I don't know as you'll understand it much more when I've explained it to you," he said, seating himself, and motioning her to the other chair. "But, yes, of course you will. You're a business woman. You know what figures mean. And really, the whole thing is as simple as A B C. You remember that I told you——"

"But are you going to stop to supper? I must send Annie out before the shops close."

"Supper? No; I couldn't eat anything. I'm too worked up for that. I'll get something at the hotel before I go to bed,—if I feel like it. But say——" the thought suddenly struck him,—"if you want to come out with me, I'll blow you off to the swaggerest dinner in London. What d'ye say?"

She shook her head. "I shall have some bread and cheese and beer at nine. That's my rule, you know. I don't like to break it. I'm always queer next day if I do. But now make haste and tell me,—you're really not broken, then? You have come out well?"

For answer, he rose, drew himself to his full height, and spread his bulky shoulders

backward. His gray-blue eyes looked down upon her with a triumphant glow in them.

"Broken?" he echoed her word with emphasis. "My dear Louisa, I'm not the sort that gets broken. I break other people. Gad, how I shall break them!"

He began pacing up and down on the narrow rug before the fender, excitedly telling his story to her. Sometimes he threw the words over his shoulder; again he held her absorbed gaze with his. He took his hands often from his pockets, to illustrate or enforce by gestures the meaning of his speech,—and then she found it peculiarly difficult to realize that he was her brother.

Much of the narrative, rambling and disconnected, with which he prefaced this story of the day, was vaguely familiar to her. He sketched now for her in summary, and with the sonorous voice of one deeply impressed with the dramatic value of his declamation, the chronicle of his wanderings in strange lands, but of these he had told her before.

•

Soon she perceived, however, that he was stringing them together on a new thread. One after another, these experiences of his, as he related them, turned upon the obstacles and fatal pitfalls which treachery and malice had put in his path. He seemed, by his account, to have been a hundred times almost within touch of the goal.

In China, in the Dutch Indies, in those remoter parts of Australia which were a waterless waste when he knew them and might have owned them, and now were yielding fabulous millions to fellows who had tricked and swindled him,—everywhere he had missed by just a hair's breadth the golden consummation. In the Western Hemisphere the tale repeated itself. There had been times in the Argentine, in Brazil just before the Empire fell, in Colorado when the silver boom was on, in British Columbia when the first rumors of rich ore were whispered about,—many times when fortune seemed veritably within his grasp. But some one had always played him false. There was never a friendship for him which could withstand the temptation of profitable treason.

But he had hung dauntlessly on. He had seen one concession slipping through his fingers, only to strain and tighten them for a clutch at another. It did not surprise his hearer,—nor, indeed, did it particularly attract her attention,—that there was nowhere in this rapid and apprehensive narrative any allusion to industry of the wage-earning sort. Apparently, he had done no work at all, in the bread-winner's sense of the word. This was so like Joel that it was taken for granted in his sister's mind. All his voyages and adventures and painful enterprises had been informed by the desire of the buccaneer,—the passion to reap where others had sown, or, at the worst, to get something for nothing.

•

The discursive story began to narrow and concentrate itself when at last it reached Mexico. The sister changed her position in her chair, and crossed her knees when Tehuantepec was mentioned. It was from that place that Joel had sent her the amazing remittance over two years ago. Curiously enough, though, it was at this point in his narrative that he now became vague as to details.

There were concessions of rubber forests mentioned, and the barter of these for other concessions, with money to boot, and varying phases of a chronic trouble about where the true boundary of Guatemala ran,—but she failed clearly to understand much about it all. His other schemes and mishaps she had followed readily enough. Somehow, when they came to Mexico she saw everything jumbled and distorted, as through a haze.

Once or twice she interrupted him to ask questions, but he seemed to attach such slight importance to her comprehending these details that she forbore. Only one fact was it necessary to grasp about the Mexican episode, apparently. When he quitted Tehuantepec, to make his way straight to London, at the beginning of the year, he left behind him a rubber plantation which he desired to sell, and brought with him between six and seven thousand pounds, with which to pay the expenses of selling it. How he had obtained either the plantation or the money did not seem to have made itself understood. No doubt, as his manner indicated when she ventured her inquiries, it was quite irrelevant to the narrative.

•

In Mexico, his experience had been unique, apparently, in that no villain had appeared on the scene to frustrate his plans. He at least mentioned no one who had wronged him there. When he came to London, however, there were villains, and to spare. He moved to the mantel when he arrived at this stage of the story, and made clear a space for his elbow to rest among the little trinkets and photographs with which it was burdened. He stood still thereafter, looking down at her; his voice took on a harsher note.

Much of this story, also, she knew by heart. This strange, bearded, grayish-haired brother of hers had come to her often during the past half-year, to the little book shop and the widow's home above it, his misshapen handbag full of papers, his heart full of rage, hope, grief, ambition, disgust, confidence,—everything but despair.

•

It was true, it had never been quite real to her. He was right in his suggestion that she had never wholly believed in him. She had not been able to take altogether seriously this clumsy, careworn, shabbily dressed man who talked about millions. It was true that he had sent her four hundred pounds for the education of her son and daughter; it was equally true that he had brought with him to London a sum which any of his ancestors, so far as she knew about them, would have deemed a fortune, and which he treated as merely so much oil, with which to lubricate the machinery of his great enterprise.

She had heard, at various times, the embittered details of the disappearance of this money, little by little. Nearly a quarter of it, all told, had been appropriated by a sleek old braggart of a company-promoter, who had cozened Joel into the belief that London could be best approached through him.

•

When at last this wretch was kicked downstairs, the effect had been only to make room for a fresh lot of blood-suckers. There were so-called advertising agents, so-called journalists, so-called "men of influence in the city,"—a swarm of relentless and voracious harpies, who dragged from him in blackmail nearly the half of what he had left before he summoned the courage and decision to shut them out.

Worse still, in some ways, were the men into whose hand he stumbled next,—a group of city men concerned in the South African market, who impressed him very favorably at the outset. He got to know them by accident, at the time when he began to comprehend the necessity of securing influential support for his scheme.

Everything that he heard and could learn about them testified to the strength of their position in the city. Because they displayed a certain amiability of manner toward him and his project, he allowed himself to make sure of their support. It grew to be a certainty in his mind that they would see him through. He spent a good deal of money in dinners and suppers in their honor, after they had let him understand that this form of propitiation was not unpleasant to them. They chaffed him about some newspaper paragraphs, in which he was described as the "Rubber King," with an affable assumption of amusement, under which he believed he detected a genuine respect for his abilities.

Finally, when he had danced attendance upon them for the better part of two months, he laid before them, at the coffee-and-cigars stage of a dinner in a private room of the Savoy, the details of his proposition. They were to form a syndicate to take over his property, and place it upon the market; in consideration of their finding the ready money for this exploitation, they were to have for themselves two-fifths of the shares in the company ultimately to be floated.

•

They listened to these details, and to his enthusiastic remarks about the project itself, with rather perfunctory patience, but committed themselves that evening to nothing definite. It took him nearly a week thereafter to get an answer from any of them. Then he learned that, if they took the matter up at all, it would be upon the basis of the syndicate receiving nine-tenths of the shares. He conceived the idea, after he had mastered his original amazement, that they named these preposterous terms merely because they expected to be beaten down, and he summoned all his good nature and tact for the task of haggling with them. He misunderstood their first show of impatience at this, and persevered in the face of their tacit rebuffs. Then, one day, a couple of them treated him with overt rudeness, and he, astonished out of his caution, replied to them in kind. Suddenly, he could hardly tell why or how, they were all enemies of his. They closed their office doors to him; even their clerks treated him with contemptuous incivility.

This blow to his pride enraged and humiliated him, curiously enough, as no other misadventure of his life had done.

•

Louisa remembered vividly the description he had given to her, at the time, of this affair. She had hardly understood why it should disturb him so profoundly; to her mind, these men had done nothing so monstrous, after all. But to him, their offense swallowed up all the other indignities suffered during the years of his Ishmaelitish wanderings in strange and distant lands.

A sombre lust for vengeance upon them took root in his very soul. He hated nobody else as he hated them. How often she had heard him swear, in solemn, vibrating tones, that to the day of his death his most sacred ambition should be their punishment, their abasement in the dust and mire!

And now, all at once, as she looked up at him, where he leaned against the mantel, these memories of hers took point and shape. It was about these men that he was talking.

•

"And think of it!" he was saying impressively. "It's magnificent enough for me to make this great hit,—but I don't count it as anything at all by comparison with the fact that I make it at their expense. You remember the fellows I told you about?" he asked abruptly, deferring to the confused look on her face.

"Yes,—you make it out of them," she repeated in an uncertain voice. It occurred to her that she must have been almost asleep. "But did I miss anything? Have you been telling what it is that you have made?"

"No; that you shall have in good time. You don't seem to realize it, Louisa. I can hardly realize it myself. I am actually a very rich man. I can't tell how much I've got,—in fact, it can be almost as much as I like,—half a million pounds, I suppose, at the start, if I want to make it that much. Yes,—it takes the breath away, doesn't it! But best of all,—a thousand times best of all,—practically every dollar of it comes out of those Kaffir swine,—the very men that tried to rob me, and that have been trying to ruin me ever since.

"I tell you what I wish, Louisa,—I wish there could only be time enough,—and I'd take it all in half-sovereigns,—two millions of them, or three millions,—and just untwist every coin, one by one, out from among their heart-strings. Oh,—but it'll be all right as it is. It's enough to make a man feel religious,—to think how those thieves will suffer."

•

"Well," she said slowly, after reflection, "it all rather frightens me."

As if the chill in the air of the cheerless room had suddenly accentuated itself, she rose, took a match-box from the mantel, and, stooping, lit the fire.

He looked down at the tall, black-clad figure, bent in stiff awkwardness over the smoking grate, and his eyes softened. Then he took fresh note of the room,—the faded, threadbare carpet, the sparse old furniture that had seemed ugly to even his uninformed boyish taste, the dingy walls and begrimed low ceiling,—all pathetic symbols of the bleak life to which she had been condemned.

"Frightens you?" he queried, with a kind of jovial tenderness, as she got to her feet; "frightens you, eh? Why, within a month's time, old lady, you'll be riding in the Park in your own carriage, with niggers folding their arms up behind, and you'll be taking it all as natural as if you'd been born in a barouche."

He added, in response to the inquiry of her lifted brows:

"Barouche? That's what we'd call in England a landau."

She stood with a foot upon the fender, her tired, passive face inclined meditatively, her rusty, old black gown drawn back by one hand from the snapping sparks. "No," she said slowly, joyless resignation mingling with pride in her voice, "I was born here, over the shop."

•

"Well, so was I," he commented lustily. "But that's no reason why I shouldn't wind up in Park Lane,—or you either."

She had nothing to say to this, apparently. After a little she seated herself again, drawing her chair closer to the hearth. "It's years since I've lit this fire before the first of November," she remarked, with the air of defending the action to herself.

"Oh, we're celebrating," he said, rubbing his hands over the reluctant blaze. "Everything goes to-night!"

Her face, as she looked up at him, betrayed the bewilderment of her mind. "You set out to tell me what it was all about," she reminded him. "You see, I'm completely in the dark. I only hear you say that you've made a great fortune. That's all I know. Or perhaps you've told me as much as you care to."

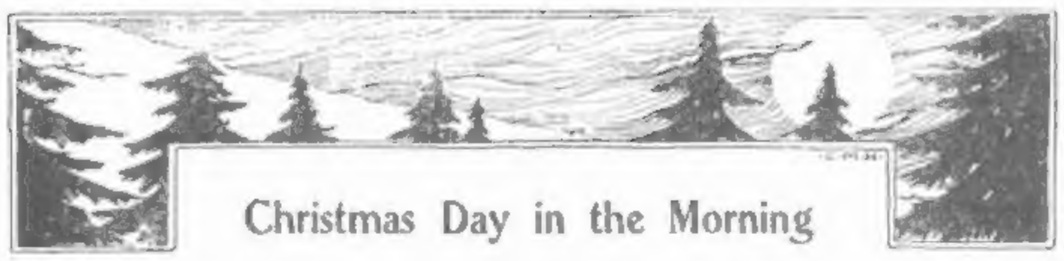
"Why, not at all," he reassured her, pulling his own chair toward him with his foot, and sprawling into it with a grunt of relief. "If you'll draw me a glass of that beer of yours I'll tell you all about it. It's not a thing for everybody to know,—not to be breathed to a human being, for that matter,—but you'll enjoy it,—and it'll be safe enough with you."

As she rose and moved toward a door, he called merrily after her:

"No more beer when that keg runs dry, you know. Nothing but champagne!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

"BROKEN? MY DEAR LOUISA, I'M NOT THE SORT THAT GETS BROKEN. I BREAK OTHER PEOPLE"



Christmas Day in the Morning

I SAW three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas day in the morning.

And what was in those ships all three,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day?
And what was in those ships all three,
On Christmas day in the morning?

Our Saviour Christ and His lady,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
Our Saviour Christ and His lady,
On Christmas day in the morning.

Pray whither sailed those ships all three,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day?
Pray whither sailed those ships all three,
On Christmas day in the morning?

Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem,
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the angels in Heaven shall sing,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
And all the angels in Heaven shall sing,
On Christmas day in the morning.

And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas day in the morning.

Then let us all rejoice amain,
On Christmas day, on Christmas day;
Then let us all rejoice amain,
On Christmas day in the morning.

—Old Christmas Songs

GRÛL'S CHRISTMAS GIFT

Captain Sansom's Rescue Party

By Charles G. D. Roberts
Drawings by B. Martin Justice

First Chapter

IN HIS sleep the child sobbed with the cold. The young mother stooped a white face over him, drew him closer to her breast, and strove to cover him more warmly with the one scant robe of red fox skins which her captors had spared to her. She was astonished to find that she had slept in her bonds.

Her arms were free, indeed, that she might care for the child and save her captors trouble. She was sitting on a pile of spruce boughs, her back against the trunk of a tree, to which she was securely tied.

The fire, in the centre of the circle of snow, had died down to a heap of glowing embers, the light of which, falling upon her face as she raised it and gazed about her in bewildered despair, showed her to be a woman of English blood and obviously gentle breeding.

The hood of her cloak had fallen back, revealing a great abundance of ruddy brown hair, in part still piled in a coiffure somewhat elaborate for the wilderness, the rest hanging in rich dishevelment over her shoulders.

•

As she stared about her, bewilderment passed into a spasm of horror. Her gravely sweet face grew pinched as the sudden disaster of yesterday reënacted itself in her brain.

She saw herself and her boy, well muffled in furs and blankets, driving in their roomy box-sleigh along the forest trail. Slowly they went, through the deep snow, but merrily enough, for the bells jingled loud on the harness, the horses were willing, the morrow would be Christmas, and each hour brought them the nearer to a joyous meeting. She saw the driver slouching on the front seat, his pointed hood of gray flannel over his head. She saw the orderly sitting erect beside him, the collar of his great coat turned up to meet the edge of his bearskin shako.

She saw Boy Jerry lift his laughing little face from the furs at her side to lisp:

"Don't you think we'll get there pretty soon, mamma?"

Then she heard again the heavy crash of muskets on both sides of the trail, their reports thinning instantly into the wolfish, appalling war-cry of the Micmacs. She saw the smoke spurt white out of the underbrush. She saw the big orderly fling up his musket with a violent, convulsive jerk, discharge it blindly, straight in the air, and topple from his seat, a limp, dreadful sprawl of legs and coat-skirts. She saw the driver lean forward, with screams and strange curses, to lash the horses into a gallop,—but too late.

She saw the painted red fiends swarm forth, surround the sleigh, seize the horses, cut the traces, drag the driver from his place, and cut him down with their hatchets. She saw herself clutch Jerry to her arms, and bury her face as she crouched over him to shut out from the eyes of both the sickening butchery.

She felt again that icy numbness in the back of her head and neck, expecting the crunch of the iron. But then, as she was pulled violently out upon the snow, she recovered her senses, and stood upright, facing the butchers with steady eyes. As she had not been killed at once, as Jerry had not been at once torn from her arms, she concluded that they were reserved either for torture or for captivity, and with a strenuous effort of will she resolved to think of nothing that might weaken her, lest she should miss some chance offer of that hope which lasts with life. She saw the savages rifle the sleigh, emptying it of all her possessions, while two of them disappeared into the woods, leading the horses.

•

With a curious spasm of pity she saw herself and Jerry standing there in the snow by the trail, waiting for their captors to notice them,—the most miserable, the most infinitely alone, the most hopelessly deserted, it seemed to her, of all the world's wretched. She remembered herself soothing Jerry's hushed but heart-breaking sobs with the promise that "Mamma will take care of her boy!" a promise which in her heart translated itself into a wild prayer that God might make it good.

And then, again, she shrank with a physical horror as a savage suddenly came up to her, gave her some guttural command which she could make nothing of, and struck her on the face with the flat of his reeking hatchet because she did not obey. At once, however, another Indian had intervened in her behalf.

•

He had spoken in a *patois* French, of which she could gather the drift, and had ordered her to put on a pair of snowshoes which the other Indian was holding. A New Hampshire woman by birth, she was an adept with the woven moosehide; and she had therefore been apt to join in the march at once, carrying Jerry, and murmuring thanksgivings in her heart for the bodily strength which now,—for the present, at least,—saved her from she knew not what indignities. Her captors had struck off from the trail, and into what seemed to her the pathless woods; and they had journeyed not only past sunset but on till moonset. When bound to her tree beside the camp-fire she had resolved not to sleep, lest she should miss some chance of rescue; but fatigue and anguish had forced upon her their own anodyne. She had slept in her bonds; and now she was so stiff she feared she could not move.

The camp, which she now for the first time took note of, was a tiny amphitheatre, dug by the Indians with their snowshoes. The walls were of snow, and about four feet in height, sufficing to keep off the wind.

•

Round the heap of embers and charring sticks in the centre sprawled the sleeping savages, comfortably bedded on spruce boughs, and wraps from the looted sleigh. The two on guard sat bolt upright, close to the fire, motionless as statues. The stony profile of the one nearest to her froze the woman's soul with a deadly terror, which was succeeded by a wave of half-animal ferocity,—the mother-fury. It set her chilled blood racing again. Her strong white fingers clenched, and she muttered to herself,—half prayer, half pledge:

"Oh, God! as long as they leave me Jerry, I'll be servile to these beasts. But if they take him from me, I'll kill some of them! I'll kill that one by the fire!"

Soon she noticed a change in the color of the night. An icy pallor stole upon it, and the coals began to turn gray. Looking up through the tree-tops far above her head, she saw that the stars had faded, and the sky was whitening with dawn. Several of the sleepers stirred, preparatory to waking.

"Christmas! Christmas morning!" she whispered to herself. "And so happy a Christmas we had looked for, Jerry and I!" The pity of it,—pity for the little one's disappointment,—gripped her throat. It came near weakening her and breaking her down to tears; but she set her teeth, and thrust the thought from her heart.

•

And now a strange sound came echoing solemnly through the woods. It was a great and bell-like voice chanting in French:

"Woe, woe to Acadie the Fair, for the hour of her desolation cometh!"

At first a wild hope of succor leaped in her heart, but it sank again instantly as she noted the attitude of the Indians. They awoke at the first notes of that strange voice; but they did not appear alarmed. They all seated themselves gravely around the fire, and seemed to await something. Jerry, too, awoke and sat up. He stared questioningly at his mother, wondering awe in his wide, blue eyes; and he forgot to complain that he was cold.

That deep-toned proclamation was repeated thrice, each time nearer and louder; but its sound so pervaded the forest that the woman, searching everywhere with her eyes, could not tell the direction whence it came. It was followed by a minute of tense silence, and then, she could not tell how, a grotesque but impressive figure stood by the fire.

A murmur ran round the circle. She caught just the one word, "Grûl! Grûl!" repeated by different voices.

He was tall, and a high, conical cap added to his stature. In the cap were stuck sprigs of hemlock and of that false mistletoe which grows in the fir trees. From under it streamed long wisps of snowy hair, meeting and mingling with the long streamers of his snowy beard. About his shoulders swung a heavy woolen cloak, woven of black and yellow in a staring but mystical pattern.

In his left hand,—and the woman noted with wonder the aristocratic fineness of the long, pallid fingers,—he held a short wand of white wood, topped with a grotesquely carven head of vivid scarlet. His right hand he held outstretched over the fading embers, into which he gazed fixedly. His face was turned half toward her, and with a new hope fluttering up she noted the noble mould of the features, the high serenity of his forehead.

Slowly he turned his face, and his eyes met hers. They pierced like points of pale, glancing steel, and her new hope chilled to extinction. Then a terrible and daunting white flame seemed to dance within them, and she shuddered, saying to herself, "Mad!" The next moment she wondered if she had spoken the word aloud, for, as if in retort, he came over to her, and stood before her, thrusting the fantastic wand toward her.

•

She shrank in overmastering fear, and averted her eyes; but little Jerry in her lap was not in the least afraid. With a cry of delight he caught the grinning scarlet head of the wand, laughed confidingly up to that terrifying face, and asked:

"Aren't you good Mr. Santa Claus? Have you come to save mamma and me?"

Slowly Grûl turned his eyes upon the child, and slowly the white fire faded out of them. They softened first into a sort of wonder, and then into mild compassion. Without a word, but very gently, he removed the child's grasp from the wand. Then, with another and more human look at the mother's face, he gathered his bright cloak closer about him, and glided off soundlessly into the receding vistas of the forest.

Dawn was now fairly abroad, and the savages stirred the fire to cook their moose-steaks before resuming the march.

• • •

Second Chapter

THE sloping *glacis* of Fort Lawrence, mantled with snow, gleamed in the noon sun. From the flagstaff on its southwest bastion flapped lazily the red ensign of England, sentineling the white levels of the marshes out to the winding line where the dark gash of the Missiguash Channel divided English sway from the domains of France.

In the low, wood-ceilinged dining-room of the officers' quarters, within the fort quadrangle, Major Ford, with Captain John Sansom and a half-dozen trim subalterns, were but lately seated to their Christmas dinner. Major Ford, being a Warwickshire Englishman, the dinner was an English dinner, with a juicy roast in sight, and a round plum pudding, aflame with cognac, in neighborly prospect.

•

Captain Sansom was a New Englander, but well inclined to see the Christmas feast no less honored at the board than his native festival of Thanksgiving. He had praised the deep-shelled Baie Verte oysters as fit to grace a banquet of Lucullus. The Madeira had been especially commended, sipped and savored, and sipped again, by all who valued the Major's good opinion,—which is to say, by all the company. Nor in this did any one compromise his conscience, for, indeed, the Major had a nice palate for Madeira. The beef, carved with ceremony, had been pronounced a credit to the fat meadows of Macean.

At this juncture an orderly appeared, saluted, and stood just inside the door.

The Major had a red, smooth-shaven face, and little irascible eyes which served to mask a very amiable sort of soul. He looked up, and glared at the orderly.

"If you please, sir," said the latter, saluting again, "some one houtside wants to see you hat once,—without any delay, sir."

He gathered his bright cloak closer about him

"What's his name? What does he want?" demanded the Major sharply.

"If you please, sir," answered the man, "'e won't give no name whatever; an' 'is business, 'e says as 'ow hit's most hinstant! If I might make so bold, sir, I think as 'ow 'e's mad. 'E looks queer; an' 'is 'at's like a steeple; an' 'e carries a little stick with a most hextrayordinary 'ead, like a Punch-an'-Judy show."

•

The Major had little imagination and much appetite. He was about to bid the stranger wait till after dinner; but Captain Sansom tactfully intervened before the decree went forth.

"I have heard of this man, Major Ford," said he. "A very strange being, who goes by the name of Grûl. Mad, doubtless, but with so far a method in his madness that he never appears save when something important is afoot. He has a strange power in Acadia. He is the mortal foe of La Garne. And he does nothing to cheapen himself. I beg you to let him come in!"

Exclamations ran around the table, indorsing the Captain's request.

"It will be so entertaining, don't you think, Major?" lisped young Lieutenant Wrenne, whose proud courage won tolerance for his affectations.

"Well, well, well," grumbled the Major. "If you like; if you like! More entertaining with the nuts and port, I should say; but at once, if you like, gentlemen. Show him in, Jenkins."

The orderly disappeared like an automaton, and a minute later the tall, fantastic form of Grûl moved noiselessly into the room.

His eyes gleamed coldly upon the Major's face. Then they rested for a few seconds upon the dark, wide-awake countenance of Captain Sansom, and then, with an indescribable power, they swept the whole circle.

Grotesque as was his appearance, no one laughed. No one knew till afterward, in looking back upon the incident, that he was grotesque. Major Ford fitted his eye-glass to his eye, took a keen scrutiny, and muttered:

"Crazy; crazy as a coot! But a gentleman,—yes! yes!" and rising from the table he very courteously offered him a chair.

The visitor waved it aside with a sort of civil scorn of—

"It may concern you to know," said he, with penetrating slowness, "that not far from here a white woman and her child are being carried into captivity by savages."

•

"I thank you for the information, sir," replied the Major, as if it had been the most ordinary affair in the world. "Where are they?"

"By now, passing through Jolicœur, on their way north to the villages of the Nepisiguit," said Grûl. "If you march from here straight toward Tidnish you will cross their trail."

"I am obliged to you," said the Major again. "It shall be seen to. Have a glass of wine with ——" but he stopped with an indignant snort when he found himself addressing the visitor's unceremonious back. In a second Grûl was gone, as swiftly and noiselessly as he came.

"'Pon my word!" ejaculated the Major, sitting down. "Most singular! But clear; quite clear! Come, gentlemen, do justice to this good roast. Another cut, I beg you, Mr. Wrenne. We must be stirring right after we have finished dinner!"

But Mr. Wrenne was on his feet, preparing to protest against delay. Captain Sansom, however, was ahead of him.

"I entreat you, sir," he cried passionately, "let me take twenty file and go at once in pursuit. They will be already far ahead of us!"

"Tut! tut!" rejoined the Major impatiently. "They must travel but slowly, with a woman. Our fellows will soon overtake them. Shall a dinner like this be spoiled for a matter of two hours' extra tramping? Sit down, sit down, Captain Sansom!"

•

The Captain sat down, but instantly sprang up again, in a strong excitement. "But the case is urgent, sir!" he cried. "I feel that it is most urgent. This morning, an hour or two back, when I was in the casemate, I distinctly heard a woman's voice call for help, somewhere from the woods beyond Beaubassin. You may laugh, but I cannot rest a moment till we set out."

The Major again screwed his glass into his eye, and scanned the speaker.

"Totally absurd, Captain Sansom," said he. "The woods are two miles away. And moreover, you were in the casemate, where you could not hear if she had called from the barracks windows!"

"I know it is impossible, but——"

"But, sit down, sir!" interrupted the Major testily. "And you, too, Mr. Wrenne. I know my business, gentlemen!"

Both sat down, but rose again at once, and this time the other officers got up with them.

The savages leaped up, some of them to fall back again and lie quite still

The Major's face darkened; but before he could thunder, Captain Sansom spoke again with vehement appeal:

"And we know our duty, sir, and will obey you to the letter," he cried, "but let me beg you to hear me patiently. How can we sit here, warm and safe, laughing over this good dinner, when a countrywoman of ours, and a little child, are out there helpless and hopeless, in the hands of those red devils of La Garne's, being dragged to who knows what fate? Think of it, sir. Why, how could we sit here guzzling? The stuff would choke us. You have no child of your own,—no wife,—or you could not be so unmoved, Major Ford, at the thought of that——"

•

"No, Captain Sansom, I have no wife, no child," interrupted the Major gravely, and a little sadly. "I thank God for it! Be thankful your own are safe in Boston, far away from the perils of a soldier's life. I am not so indifferent, however, as you think; only, impetuosity seemed to me needless in this matter. Sit down, gentlemen! It shall be as you wish. You may go at once, Captain, taking one of our officers with you, and twenty men. Let them put bread and beef in their knapsacks. You will select, of course, men who can use these abominable snow-shoes. Whom do you wish to help you?"

All the company sprang up to volunteer, but Captain Sansom laid his hand on young Wrenne's shoulder.

"Thank you, Major!" he exclaimed, with elation in his voice. "I'll take Wrenne, if he is willing. And if the rest of you will save a little of the pudding for us, you will see us back shortly to eat it, with good appetite and good conscience!"

"Who would have thought, gentlemen," grumbled the Major, peering around upon the diminished company as Sansom and Wrenne hastily withdrew, "that my staff would be threatening mutiny in the very teeth of a Christmas dinner!"

• • •

Third Chapter

OF THE half raw, half burned moose-meat, thrown to her by her captors as to a dog, the woman forced herself to eat abundantly, fearing what might happen if her strength should fail. The child was by this time hungry enough to make a meal off the shreds which had chanced upon a fair roasting.

At the first of the march the woman found herself so stiff that she could hardly take a step without groaning and tottering; but the dread of having Jerry taken from her held her silent, and presently her force came back and she was able to march rapidly and easily.

This fact, however, she was astute enough to conceal. She realized that if haste were an object to her captors, delay must be an object to the captives. She therefore kept her fatigue in evidence, and lagged as much as she dared, enduring blows without a murmur, and finally convincing the savages that she was doing her best.

Well on in the morning, when the sun was high over the ancient, imperturbable fir-trees, the band crossed a narrow piece of open, jutting into the forest from the marsh-levels. Here there was a moment's pause. The savage who spoke French came up to her and grabbed her roughly by the arm.

"Look!" said he, grinning maliciously. "English there! Call them! Maybe they hear and come get you!"

Following his gesture, she looked blankly out across the marshes; but started and quivered to see the red flag flying over the low ramparts of an English fort.

Her eyes blinded at once with tears, and her first impulse was to scream for succor. But she saw the folly of it, and would not give the savages cause for jeers. Only her heart, that cried out desperately, till she felt that those in the fort must feel, if they could not hear, the frantic summons.

•

Some while later they crossed the bed of a small tidal stream left empty by the ebb. It was a chaos of ragged and mud-stained ice-cakes, where the footing was painfully difficult. Carrying her snowshoes on one arm, Jerry on the other, she struggled to keep up with the band, but in the effort she fell and bruised herself sorely. Jerry, too, was shaken, though not hurt, and he began to cry.

For a few minutes the sound passed unnoticed. Then fierce eyes turned menacingly upon her, and she strove to quiet him, but in vain. At last the nearest savage made a cruel pass at the little one's head with the handle of his hatchet.

The woman swerved like lightning, and caught the stroke upon her own arm, at the same time flashing upon the brute a look of such murderous fury that he laughed, and made no attempt to provoke her further. Jerry, however, seemed to realize the need of silence, for he suddenly stopped crying, and even strove to choke back his wrenching, voiceless sobs.

From this forward the woman walked sunken in a sort of numbness. She forgot to hang back and delay the march. She did not think, nor fear, nor hope, nor despair. She merely hugged the child close to her breast, and aimlessly counted her steps.

As she remembered afterward, however, her sense of smell became abnormally acute; so that she noted, unconsciously, the different kinds of woods as they passed through them. The biting, medicinal savor of the cedar thickets fixed itself in her brain, to be followed by the thin pungency of the hackmatack swamps, the tonic spiciness of the fir and spruce groves, the nutty aroma of the hardwood ridges. The curious legacy of that horrible march was a quite useless but remarkable capacity for distinguishing different kinds of forest growth when passing through them in the dark all her life after.

•

About sunset halt was called and a fire built, although, as there were no preparations for a camp such as they had occupied the night before, the woman vaguely concluded that the march would be resumed after eating. Jerry had complained of hunger, and now a piece of dried raw fish was flung to her.

Repugnant as it was, she forced herself to eat it, and tried to get the child to follow her example. He refused obstinately, and at length began to cry for bread and butter.

In a growing panic she tried to soothe him, conscious of the cruel eyes of anger which the sound drew upon them. With desperate haste she began to whisper to him a wonderful fairy story to divert his attention.

In the midst of the tale she was startled by a scattering volley of musket shots almost at her back. The savages leaped up, some of them to fall back again and lie quite still.

Then came shouts and cries, English voices, rude but blessed English oaths; and she sprang to her feet. The savages were fleeing. Fur-capped, long-coated men were running toward her. One of them, his dark face smitten with amazement, was far in advance,—was close to her! Jerry struggled to escape from her encircling arms.

"Papa! Papa! Papa!" he cried; and the woman, tottering forward, felt her knees give way. She fell, blind with joy, into the arms of Captain John Sansom.

• • • • •

CHRISTMAS at the SOUS-PREFECTURE

By MAURICE VAUCAIRE

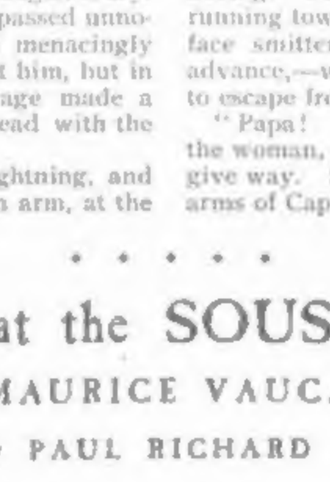
Englished by PAUL RICHARD FREISINGER

BLAIROT and Thomassin, the former the mayor, the latter the town clerk of St. Joseph, a little township in the sous-prefecture of Roume, near Nevers, held the following conversation:

Blairot: "We ought to thank the under-prefect for his kindness to our community."

Thomassin: "Most decidedly. Thanks to him, the General Council voted 1200 francs toward the repair of our cemetery wall."

Blairot: "We ought to make him a present, a gift of some kind, to show him our gratitude, and that of our citizens."



Thomassin: "Have you an idea?"

Blairot: "How, if we bring him some apples? We had plenty of them this year."

Thomassin: "Oh, yes! We might bring him some apples."

Blairot: "Only, these people do not eat apples raw; we ought to cook them."

Thomassin: "And that will give him a fine dessert!"

Blairot: "Well, I'll give two pounds, and you?"

Thomassin: "And I'll make it two pounds, also."

Blairot: "All right, Mr. Thomassin; we'll bring him the four pounds of apples tomorrow morning after breakfast."

•

And they did as they had arranged; on the next morning, the 25th of December, Blairot and Thomassin set out for the office of the under-prefect, the latter carrying the basket with the cooked apples. The boy in charge of the office received them coolly.

Blairot: "We have brought some dessert for monsieur le sous-prefect!"

Thomassin: "Can we not see him?"

The boy introduced them into the office of the representative of the Republic.

Blairot: "As a token of our gratitude, we, the town clerk and I, take the liberty to offer you a little gift——"

Thomassin: "A present——"

Blairot: "Somewhat insignificant, perhaps, but nevertheless given in the spirit of the devotion——"

Thomassin: "And with the intention to please you——"

The under-prefect, an old habitué of the Chat-Noir and other famous establishments of Montmartre, cordially shook hands with the two country officials and saw them to the door.

•

While Blairot and Thomassin were descending the stairs the representative of France opened the basket.

"Those boors meant to make fun of me!" he exclaimed. "Well, we'll see about that! August, August!——"

The office boy entered.

"Open the window and do as I do!" The under-prefect threw the cooked apples, one after the other, upon the mayor and the town clerk as they left the house. The boy, glad to obey the order, did his best with every throw. Every apple hit.

The two citizens of Saint Joseph, crossing the yard, submitted to the avalanche without daring to turn around.

Thomassin, lowering his head, muttered: "What do you say to this?"

Reaching the other side of the yard and seeking refuge under the gateway, Blairot drew a deep breath. "I say, it was well that we cooked them, for otherwise they would have killed us, the scoundrels!"

One Christmas Centuries Ago

By ALFRED DOMETT

IT WAS the calm and silent night!
Seven hundred years and fifty-three
Had Rome been growing up to might,
And now was queen of land and sea.
No sound was heard of clashing wars;
Peace brooded o'er the hushed domain;
Apollo, Pallas, Jove and Mars
Held undisturbed their ancient reign,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago.

'Twas in the calm and silent night!
The Senator of haughty Rome,
Impatient, urged his chariot's flight,
From lordly revel rolling home!
Triumphal arches, gleaming, swell
His breast with thoughts of boundless sway;
What recked the Roman, what befell
A paltry province far away,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago?

Within that province far away
Went plodding home a weary boor;
A streak of light before him lay,
Fallen through a half-shut stable door
Across his path. He passed, for naught
Told what was going on within;
How keen the stars! his only thought,—
The air how calm and cold and thin,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

Oh, strange indifference! low and high
Drowsed over common joys and cares;
The earth was still, and knew not why
The world was listening, unawares!
How calm a moment may precede
One that shall thrill the world forever!
To that still moment, none would heed,
Man's doom was linked no more to sever,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

It is the calm and solemn night!
A thousand bells ring out, and throw
Their joyous peals abroad, and smite
The darkness, charmed and holy now!
The night that erst no name had worn,
To it a happy name is given;
For in that stable lay, new-born,
The peaceful Prince of Earth and Heaven,
In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago!

—Collected Poems.

THE PROFESSOR'S DAUGHTER

By Anna Farquhar

With Drawings by HENRY HUTT

NINTH CHAPTER

ON Saturday afternoon, the Professor having persisted in his determination to remain at the house working and writing, Louise, wearing a sunbonnet of Melissa's on her head to protect her eyes from the glare of the water, went with Oliver outside half a mile, where he was to initiate her into the delights of deep-sea fishing. She had always been a good sailor, and naturally this fact added to his pleasure in taking her, for, as Ol said, "Them's ain't sure 'bout their stomics better stay to hum."

Professor Fremont was a man who could not outlive the strength of early ties. The friends of his later life were never to him what the friends of his youth had been. Unlike Louise, he enjoyed all kinds of people when they did not intrude upon what he called his special work,—in reality his diversion, a gratification of his native tastes for erudition,—but he loved few.

•

This afternoon he seated himself on the porch, wearing the velvet smoking-jacket and the soft felt hat pulled down to shade his eyes as he turned over the leaves of the Iliad, searching for a particular passage whose literal construction his memory had lost. He heard a team coming along the road from Shannock, and, as is customary with city people, who, after a short residence in the country, acquire the native curiosity about the occupants of teams, he looked up to see who was passing. No one passed. The team seemed to have stopped on the other side of the house, likely by the barn.

The Professor resumed his search. Presently footsteps were heard coming around the house toward the porch. Professor Fremont looked up again, lowering his reading-glasses on his nose so that he might get a better view over their rims. An elderly gentleman was approaching,—a man with a determined stride, a corpulent figure, a broad chest, the reddish skin of a high-liver growing a trifle gouty, and wearing eye-glasses on a well-developed nose in front of sea-blue eyes like Doctor Layton's. The men looked at each other.

The newcomer said: "Will you be kind enough to tell me if Professor Thomas Fremont is staying——"

"Billy Everett!" called out the Professor, throwing down his book and handkerchief as he arose with outstretched hand. "Billy, don't you know me? It's your voice and eyes! They haven't changed a particle!"

The other said "Tom!" as their hands met, and wonder at the change thirty years had made in each other's appearance was forgotten as they stood clasping hands and renewing acquaintance through the eyes which may grow dim, but never lose their personality for a friend.

They continued to look for a moment longer; then Mr. Everett said, still shaking his friend's hand in both of his: "Tom, I'd given up seeing you again in this life."

•

"I answered your last letter, written from Pittsburg, and wrote twice more to the same address when I received no reply, but never heard from you again, nor could I find out anything about you through Chickey Downey or Bob Wilson or any of the fellows I saw at the class reunion. Why weren't you there?" replied the Professor, falling into college phraseology, which rang its note of pathos from his voice, touched with age.

"I never received the letters, Tom. I didn't live in Pittsburg long, and about that time things weren't very bright with me; my chief desire was to get away from people,—but here, let me take a chair. I'm getting too old to stand, and I'll tell you all about myself. But where's your daughter? Everett wrote that Professor Fremont was down at the beach with a grown-up daughter. Time is flying, Tom; it is hard to realize the grown-up daughter."

"My daughter is my sunshine, Billy. I hope you have one, too, and a son to be proud of."

"No, Tom; I'm alone in the world. Everett Layton is as good as a son (or younger brother) to me, but he is not the real thing. No son could be more dutiful and kind than he is, though. Where is your daughter? I must see her."

•

"She has gone fishing with the fisherman, Oliver Peckham. Don't you see their boat anchored out there? I haven't my far-sighted glasses here."

"Yes, I see a boat off in a line with the dune," said Everett, adjusting his glasses. "Ol's a great character, isn't he? But here, I am wasting time. Tell me what you have been doing since we parted under the Washington elm that hot day thirty years ago or more. Thirty years! Tom, think of it! Thirty years! No wonder we did not recognize each other at a first glance. I'd know you anywhere now! You're thinner, your hair is turned, and the spectacles make a change, but I'd know you anywhere when that hat is put back off your face."

"You're not so very much changed, either," said the Professor, looking him carefully over. "A little stouter, perhaps——"

"Fatter, you mean,—say it out. Fat's the word!" interrupted Everett, with an echo of Doctor Layton's laugh.

"Well, latter,—if that suits you better,—a little more color in the face, and the hair,—how's the hair, Billy? You were calling on a hair-tonic lady at frequent intervals, I remember, in the old days."

•

"There isn't much to speak of, and none to spare. I have to take a hand mirror to see what's left myself. I'm afraid you'll have to get your other glasses to see even that." He took off his hat, disclosing a bald head, extending back to the crown. The sides and back were covered with what was left of his thick, wavy dark hair, which had been the pride of his youthful good looks, and was still apparent in his military mustache.

"Never mind that, Billy. Your strength was never entirely in your hair," replied his friend. "Now I must tell you all about myself. You know of my marriage, though you couldn't be present at the wedding. Let me see,—it was soon after the wedding I wrote that last letter. I thought your wedding or mine would bring us together again if nothing else could.

"Ah, Billy! you bring those times back to me forcibly. Mary and I were so happy, Billy. Though she soon left me for the land of mystery, our few years together were compensation for all the years of loneliness since. She was an angel,—she was my wife, my friend, my daily companion. Marriage was more than I expected it to be. You remember how cynical we used to be about that state? I found we were mistaken, and when Mary left me I thought I could not live alone; but time softens everything, Billy,—even the saddest. Time and our God-given power of forgetting. How could we live if we could not forget the worst pangs of separation from those we love?"

•

The Professor shaded his eyes with one hand, and Mr. Everett walked to the end of the porch and back. "Since then my little girl has taken her place. My sister kept house for me until Louie was nearly grown, when she died, after which Louie took the reins herself, and has been all that a daughter could be. When I inherited some money from my father I gave up my professorship, and we have lived since then independently and happily, traveling most of the time in Europe, where I went to collect material for a literary project I have on hand."

When the Professor ceased speaking, Mr. Everett coughed slightly, and said with a long sigh:

"It has been a good and useful life. You have the greatest joy of old age left to you, Tom,—happy recollections."

"Have you not those, Billy? With your joyous nature, one would have supposed your life would have been one long holiday. And your wife? I think you said you were alone?" asked he tentatively.

"My wife? My wife?" replied Everett bitterly. "But of course you don't know. I've never talked to any one about her, Tom,—not even to Everett,—but I believe it would relieve me to speak to you."

"Do as you feel about that, Billy."

"I married a fashionable city girl. We had, to please her, one of those big, sensational weddings, on a par with a circus. I gave her my entire affection, Tom,—I fairly worshiped her for a year after our marriage, even when I saw her selfishness and lack of character, which she could not hide after we were man and wife. At the end of two years she eloped with a man who promised to marry her if I divorced her, which I did, but the cad deserted her. Then she wrote to me for help. I supported her at a distance for five years,—I could not see her again; my love had turned to wormwood and gall, and still the memory of her fascinates me to this day as no other woman can do. But at the end of that time she died. Marriage proved a failure to me. I found some verses the other day, Tom, that echoed my sentiments.

•

He pulled out a bill-book from his breast pocket from which he took a clipping, and read:

"Oh happier he who gains not
The love some seem to gain;
The joy that custom stains not
Shall still with him remain;
The loneliness that wanes not
The love that ne'er can wane.

"In dreams she grows not older,
The land of dreams among,
Though all the world wax colder,
Though all the songs be sung;
In dreams doth he behold her
Still fair and kind and young."

When he had finished reading and had replaced the book, he looked up to see the Professor picking up a handkerchief from off the porch and covertly applying it to his eyes. He then leaned across to Billy Everett with his hand extended. They clasped hands once more in silence. Presently the Professor said: "I have much to be grateful for in my own life when I hear your story, dear friend. Will you permit Louie and me to help you to forget? Your nephew insists upon our remaining down here during October on account of my daughter's health, which he considers delicate, and the greatest happiness I could know would be a renewal of our old companionship. Billy, do you remember the day we tied tin pails to the tails of some cats we had collected, then turned them loose in old Bumble-Bee's Greek recitation?"

"Yes; wasn't he in a devil of a humor? And do you remember that fool girl, Minnie Weston, to whom we both proposed, telling her the same story, that there was insanity and murder in the family, and we were as poor as church mice, but we'd love her until Gabriel blew his trumpet?"

"Yes. If I remember rightly she accepted you and refused me. How did you get out of it? I don't recall."

Reminiscences occupied two full hours, and were only interrupted by Melissa's appearance at the door and her ejaculation:

"Land sakes! Where'd you come from, Mr. Everett? Thought you's out West!"

As Mr. Everett joked with Melissa, which seemed to be the tendency of all who knew her, they heard another team drive up, and soon Doctor Layton appeared.

•

"I want to know! Where'd you drop from? Thought you wus comin' to-morrow. It never do rain but it pours in Little Rhody," called out Melissa.

"Another surprise party, Melissa. I can't keep away from you long at a time, you know. Uncle Billy, how are you? Professor, the same?" extending a hand to each. "I'm just in time for the reunion. I came down this afternoon to stay all night with Uncle Billy before coming over here to-morrow, but found the bird flown, and started in pursuit. Where's the daughter of the family? Oh! I see!—there she comes, with her ideal in tow," indicating the two approaching from the bridge. "Well, how did you find Chicago, Uncle Billy? Noisy and porky as ever?"

With a physician's keen insight and his own quick sympathies, Layton saw that the two older men had been exchanging confidences that had touched their core, and he kept them answering his questions about the Western trip and the recent storm until Louise and Oliver drew near, when his manner changed, and the teasing tone he used with her came back into his voice as he exclaimed:

"What have we here! The ghost of Melissa? Professor, are we to present a sunbonnet like that to my august relative? Miss Fremont, come forth from beneath, and permit me to present my uncle (known to you as Billy Everett), the Royal Highness of the village of Shannock. Uncle, this is my patient, Miss Louise Fremont." Louise had asked Oliver as they land. "There were not people on the porch of the house. His remarkable vision made easy work of determining their identity, consequently she was fully prepared for the meeting.

•

With a bow in Doctor Layton's direction, she walked toward Mr. Everett, holding out both hands as she said: "Is it really Billy Everett? I can hardly believe in his reality. He has been an invisible member of our family ever since I was a child. Yes, this is surely his handshake, said to be the most friendly on earth."

"I am Billy," he replied. "May I kiss Tom's girl?" Without waiting for consent, Everett bent down and kissed Louise, continuing, "We have just arranged that I am to share the daughter; haven't we, Tom?"

The Professor, again surprised at Louise's unusual warmth of manner with a stranger, was rejoiced as well, and replied heartily: "You can have all of my girl that you can win. She is hard to win, but once gained she is 'faithful unto death.'"

Layton had moved around to his uncle's right hand. As her father said this, Louise unintentionally glanced at him. The Doctor stood looking at her intently with a sobered expression in his eyes. She felt herself getting red all over with the blush that looks like a scarlet fever symptom. She looked quickly away and up to Mr. Everett, who still held her hand.

"She's gettin' consid'ble sunburned, ain't she, Doc?" remarked Ol, who had been standing by, silently observing the scene. At this another flush of blood ran over her face, and she put on the sunbonnet, drawing her hand away.

"Why, Ol, how are you?" said Mr. Everett. "I forgot all about you, because I was meeting for the first time my old friend's daughter. Professor Fremont and I went to school together when we were boys. Could you think of us as boys?"

•

"We all o' us's got to be boys before we're men folks, an' I s'pose you's same's all the rest,—young colts as didn't like the bit none too well," replied Oliver. "I mus' be goin'. Melissy round anywheres? Here's sculp an' two baby mack'rel we ketched. The gurl hauled 'em in hand over hand. Fish'd ought to know better'n to hook on to her bait. Doc, you comin' down along o' me to-night?"

"Yes, I'll be down later, after we have talked Uncle Billy out."

"I cal'late you could do that, if anybody could," called back Ol as he carried the fish in to Melissa.

But it seemed impossible to talk Uncle Billy out. At Melissa's urgent invitation, he

EDITOR'S NOTE—Synopsis of preceding chapters of this story was given in last week's issue of the POST.

stayed to tea. When he did leave, Doctor Layton said: "I'll be up to Shannock to-day week to spend Sunday with you, Uncle Billy; my vacation has begun."

"That's right, Everett. Come before, if you can. Why not all come up on Saturday and stay over Sunday with me? That would be something like! My housekeeper pines for guests in the house. She says I am a gouty old fossil to live so much alone."

•

It was agreed that they should accept his invitation, with the hope of seeing him at the beach beforehand. Layton said good-night with his uncle, and walked out with him to the high cart, which Uncle Everett had brought from England ten years before, and doted on as one of his choicest possessions.

"Now, father, you are happy, I know," said Louise, as the guests departed. "Billy Everett has materialized."

"Yes, Louie, dear, it has been a time of rejoicing to me. There are no friends like old friends, and Billy has not changed, except in inevitable physical ways. We are both old men, Louie; our youth and his good looks are left behind. He was a great ladies' man and very handsome,—not that he is not handsome now, but you know, Louie, what time will do by looking at *your* father."

"You grow handsomer every day, father, and I think Mr. Everett is very good-looking now. He and his nephew resemble each other greatly."

"Yes; if Doctor Layton wore a mustache he would resemble Billy, with this difference: that the nephew is a firmer, more ambitious man than Billy ever was. He never cared for worldly emoluments. His inherited means makes him independent, and he never cared to dig. Louie, I wish you would call him Uncle Billy,—the way Doctor Layton does,—it would gratify both him and me. Would it seem too familiar to you on short acquaintance?"

•

"Rather familiar, I should say, father," replied Louise, pulling out the embroidery on her handkerchief and looking down at it as she spoke. "But I'll do it if it makes you happy, father. Isn't it strange how we meet and know hundreds of people who barely hold our attention, then suddenly a few come into our lives who seem to belong near us at once. I think I should like a home if I could have about me, say, a dozen such congenial spirits, with all of the others barred out. Oliver told me to-day that he wished I had more 'feelin' eyes.' I said I could not show my feelings, and he said something to me that I shall never forget. He said: 'Gurl, you won't mind me, will you, if I say's you don't know how to feel's well's you might fur all folks? You stan' back from 'em, an' that makes 'em stan' back from you theirselves. It's love as makes love, every time.

"Why do you suppose Jesus had so much love give to Him? Because He give out so much furst. When the wind blows hard from the nor'east a day or two it nearly al'ays swings round in time to the so'west an' blows back a spell. When you give a man love, he gives his back, an' with hate the same. You don't hate folks, but you jus' don't care nothin' 'tall about most o' 'em.' That is what he said, as nearly as I can repeat it, father, in his language, and I know he told the truth. I have felt it myself, before, when I have been with people like Doctor Layton, who gives out so much warmth and kindness of feeling, and seems so happy in giving. I intend henceforth to cultivate the acquaintance of people wherever we go, and try to like them better. I know I would be happier, especially if you must ever leave me alone in life, father."

•

"I am sure you would, my daughter," said the Professor, leaning over her and stroking her hair with his favorite caress. "Many times I have desired to say to you what the fisherman said, but I feared to hurt you; and moreover, I believe that such revelations come to people in their own appointed way. This native fisherman is an instrument in the hands of a Guiding Power, and you have that in you waiting for the match to be applied which will set your light burning before men."

"No, no, father; I have nothing great in me! Do not let your own love deceive you. But I begin to see what a wonderful power on earth for good or evil is human love, that idealism is a mistake, and I want to feel what other people do."

"You cannot help having inherited some of my father's qualities. He was a typical New Englander; conservative, self-sufficient, hard as a rock in his sense of right and duty for himself and others. I feared my father too much to have loved him. He had no charity for other men's sins, and in that very fact was committing a sin himself. He never saw the beam in his own eye because it did not happen to resemble his neighbors'. Open your heart to charity, dearie. You are not lenient always, Louie. Remember, man is mortal while here, whatever he may be beyond this life."

This ended the talk for this time, but it took Louise several hours to get to sleep. She lay thinking. The time had come in her life which to the individual is weighty with significance, though a common experience among those who broaden and deepen the channel of their lives as they mature. She had begun to look within, where she saw her own deficiencies, and in so doing reduced her standard for other people to a rational height. The Pharisee in us must be slaughtered before we can fairly balance good and evil as we know it.

Louise had throughout her life openly condemned the flagrant lack of charity expressed among people, while at the same time she silently nursed an ideal of human living beyond the possibility of mortals.

•

Her standard had hitherto been the only standard within her comprehension, a nonconformity to which relegated individuals to outer darkness as far as her acquaintance was

An elderly gentleman was approaching

concerned. She was the descendant of Puritans, and no blame could rightfully be attached to her for the possession of their salient qualities, as long as her eyes were closed to herself, as long as she did not realize that she would have wittingly burned witches.

After that night, when she received her first intimations, a new road was opened up to her, but her feet, long used to the "straight and narrow path," moved stumblingly along the way. Regeneration is not a thing of the passing moment or hour; time and purpose alone can work the miracle.

•

After "the assembly of the clans," as Doctor Layton called the recent meeting on the porch, the days seemed to flash by. No one could account for them; no one wished to. Human accord hovering over a garden-spot of Nature is an indication of what Heaven might be. Doctor Layton continued to promote in Louise a surface antagonism by his teasing manner and tendency to hold her fancy down to earth; but this was only apparent to the two of them. Ol's penetration was not subtle; in seeing to the heart of things he frequently overlooked important surface indications. Billy Everett drove over frequently, but he and the Professor were too occupied with each other to notice trivial matters like an occasional scornful glance or word of Louise's directed at Layton and his mocking tone in reply, or a half-veiled tendency of hers to preach at him over other men's shoulders.

•

It was a case of strong attraction between mind and matter; not that Louise was all mind, or the Doctor all matter, but in the contest each chose to put forth that form of strength for the time being. Several times the elderly chums preferred to sit on Melissa's front porch talking over old times and the long interval since those days. Ol usually accompanied the Doctor and his patient, but occasionally he was called to Shannock, or occupied with his own affairs, thus leaving them to sail, tramp or sit on the sands in the out-of-doors conversation whose freedom induces friendship if anything will. Doctor Layton never encouraged her to talk about her eyes. He seemed to her to treat the question lightly, and in slight resentment of his manner she refrained from opening the subject, after the first attempt to draw from him an opinion. Frequently he told her how apparently she was gaining strength from the out-door life, and once or twice he threw off a stone, asking her if she could see where it fell.

The three spent the Sunday they had pledged to Mr. Everett in his interesting old house in Shannock, where he lived in the utmost comfort a single man can know. His housekeeper was a distant connection, older than himself, who took a family and personal pride in the ordering of his household affairs, without allowing her interest to descend to the level of matrimonial design. This house was furnished with quaint and curious objects of hereditary value and foreign descent. The house would have been masculine in its effects had not Mr. Everett inherited many objects of feminine taste, for both he and his nephew knew more about science, politics and other distinctively manly affairs than they did of the proper age and designs of rugs, sofa pillows and hangings. They were old-fashioned Americans of the masculine gender. They enjoyed house decorations, but they held that specific knowledge on such matters belonged to woman's sphere, to importers and upholsterers. There are a few such men left, but not many.

•

Louise had brought herself to say to Mr. Everett, looking as shy as a school girl as she did so: "Mr. Everett, father says I am to call you Uncle Billy. Do you object?"

"Object, my dear! Object! How could I? Of course you are to call me Uncle Billy. All young people do, and I like it. Tom's girl should call me so first of all."

"But I am not a girl, Uncle B-i-l-l-y,—I'm getting to be quite a middle-aged person——"

"Middle-aged nothing!" taking her by the shoulders with a little shake. "You're the child of our old age. Kiss me, and stop saying such ridiculous things. I'm your Uncle Billy now and always, my dear."

A lump arose in Louise's throat as he kissed her forehead paternally. She had begun to realize his own loneliness in the midst of worldly possessions and comfort, although all she knew of his life was that his wife had not lived many years.

She looked up at him and said simply: "I love you already, Uncle Billy."

"God bless you, my child. That is the first time any one has told me that in twenty years. I'm a lonely old man, and I thank you for saying it. I'll try to deserve your affection."

They were interrupted by the entrance of Doctor Layton, who, seeing that he had intruded upon confidences, tried to back out unobserved, but his uncle called him.

•

"Come here, Everett, and behold me a happy man. This child thinks she can like me well enough to call me Uncle Billy, and I am a proud man."

"You have reason to be proud. I don't believe she would even call me her friend, while in the short space of ten days she has found an ideal and an uncle."

"You are my attending physician," said Louise, with a sarcastic droop of her lips. "Isn't that high-sounding enough for you?"

"Oh, a man has to take what he can get," he said, with the daring look in his eyes always disconcerting to her. "But I came in for a time-card. I'm called to town in consultation, so I must leave you to-night, and will go directly to the beach on my return, when I open office hours at the camp in the morning, and go gunning with Ol in the afternoon. The frost last night and the wind to-day will make the birds fly."

Louise saw little more of him until the middle of the week, when one morning he came up to the porch where she was sitting reading and exclaimed in his sudden way:

"What did I tell you about reading, Miss Fremont? You are down here for play, not for work. Gather cobwebs on your brain,—they will do you good,—and digest the literary food of years."

"Good-morning, Doctor Layton. You might be called a precipitate person."

•

"Yes, if all people had the extensive vocabulary you have I might; but, thank fortune, they haven't. Have you noticed the teams passing on the way to the beach? Come with me, will you? I wish to show you a picturesque suggestion of a Breton coast."

"How far must we go to see it?"

"Only to the dunes. The heavy sea last night brought in tons of seaweed, which the farmers about here use as a fertilizer. Men, boys, and even one woman have been coming for miles since four o'clock this morning. They bank the weed on the sand first, then cart it away."

"How novel and un-American it does sound! I'll be ready in a minute. Father has gone driving with Uncle Billy."

As he sat waiting for her, Melissa came out with her jocular expression of surprise at his presence. Surprise seemed to be her strongest form of welcome.

"Be you some tuckered, Doctor, after shootin' over the hills?"

"Not a bit of it, Melissa. I'm as sound as a greening, and as tough as the biscuits we had for breakfast. Ol made them," he laughed.

"Why don't you do's I say—come here fur victuals? The ole man an' the gurl won't mind. She's perkin' up, ain't she? She's laughed three times in my hearin' o' late. There ain't much the matter o' her, be they?"

"Oh, no," he replied indifferently. "She will be stronger than you, Melissa, if you don't stop eating pie three times a day."

"Shoo! Pie never hurt nobody. Say, you said he be a widdy man, didn't you?" smiled Melissa.

"No, I didn't say anything about it," he replied, looking sharply at her as she stood with her hands on her hips and hair blown into wisps hanging over her ears and eyes.

•

"Oh, he be,—he tole me so hisself. He's real pleasant, ain't he?" she remarked, smiling more. "He ain't too ole to keep company, either. He's jus' ripe, ain't he?"

Layton leaned back and shook with laughter. "Melissa Stillman," he cried, "you're undoubtedly an offspring of old Adam and Eve. Now, look here," he continued more soberly, "if you go to bothering the Professor, I'll send them home and go myself."

"I ain't botherin' nobody. I only asked you a simple question," and she flounced into the house, almost upsetting Louise at the door.

Louise had grown accustomed to Melissa's peculiarities and varieties of manner, therefore her curiosity was not aroused at the moment. She only remarked that Miss Melissa weighed more than she appeared to, and they started off together.

It was an ideal autumn day,—the summer-time touched with frost. The sky was a thick blue, with but little white in it, and the clouds moved like blue-black floating islands occasionally shading into soft gray tones. The birds were flying restlessly about, as though exhilarated and excited by the air. The sands of the dunes wore none of their delicate pink flush frequently apparent under the influence of a mellow air and a flood of gold at sunset; they were white,—dazzlingly white,—and the water exaggerated the image of the sky, adding a touch of cruelty and mockery by its savage motion.

•

The tide was at ebb, leaving about ten feet of matted seaweed exposed on the sand. Ox carts and horse teams were being loaded with the brown weed by a dozen men wearing high rubber boots, as they stood in the water or the wet of the weed, pitching it into the carts and wagons with pitchforks. Louise only received a broad effect of this picturesque scene until Doctor Layton had assisted her to climb the high dune on whose summit they settled themselves for a bird's-eye view.

"This is glorious, Doctor Layton! Glorious is the only word for it!" exclaimed Louise. "When I stand on this dune in the midst of a solemn gray day, or when the sands are flushed with the marvelous west at sunset, or when the white fleece

They held that specific knowledge on such matters belonged to woman's sphere, to importers and upholsterers

floats like sheep's wool across an Indian summer sky, my impulse is to sing out, 'The glory of God! The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork! Oh, ye sons of men, how long will ye turn My glory into shame!'"

"I know the feeling," he said earnestly. "It is the glory of God! Sing it now."

She looked far out at sea and said nothing. An expressive person would have obeyed him because of his sympathy. She did not because she could not; instead, she said after a moment: "See that blue cart with the cream-colored oxen. What a bit of color!"

"You must call them cattle if you wish to sound at all intelligent down here. They are called the cattle, and cows are critters."

•

"You know enough for both," she replied. "Is that a woman working among the men? I can't distinguish any one at that distance."

"Yes; she is the only advocate of women's emancipation in the neighborhood. She farms a little place up back, seaweeds it, and does all the chores, with the help of a small son. See him with his little pitchfork standing near her.

"Her worthless husband loafs around grog-shops in Shannock, and she is the man of the family. The neighborhood ladies, following the lead of their sex, make invidious remarks about her housekeeping, and they do say the pig sleeps in the parlor; but you know how women will talk. Can you see Ol at work near the blue cart with the Clarkes? He gets them down here by midnight when he sees the weed coming in, and they work day and night cleaning the beach."

•

"No; I can't distinguish him from the rest. How I wish I could! He must look more like a picture than ever," Louise replied.

"He does. His figure shows up well among those men. I'll call him up here afterward. Miss Fremont," he continued, suddenly changing his tone, "why is it you do not like me?"

She turned her eyes slowly from the scene before them toward him, as though to gain time, and answered: "What leads you to think I do not? Have I been rude to you in any way?"

"Certainly not; there is a long distance between rudeness and indifference. With your father and Uncle Billy and Oliver you seem perfectly at home and happy, but as soon as I come on the scene you begin to freeze. Do you really dislike me, or have I done something to offend you?"

"Why do you ask me this, Doctor Layton? Can't you let things alone? We get on very well."

"I ask you because I wish to know," he replied, making the nervous motion with his hands about his chin that men who have once worn beards make.

"Then I will tell you. I like you better than I desire to like you," said Louise, looking off to sea again.

"You will have to explain that," he replied.

"I tell you this at your request, because I wish to know if I can ever allow myself to like you. You appear to be two distinct people,—the man known in the city and the man known in the country. I could never have a friend in that city man, and I wish the country man were my friend,—so there you have it."

"You mean that you have it, for I certainly have not. The explanation means absolutely nothing to me, Miss Fremont," he said, breaking off some marsh grass and slowly running its length through his hand.

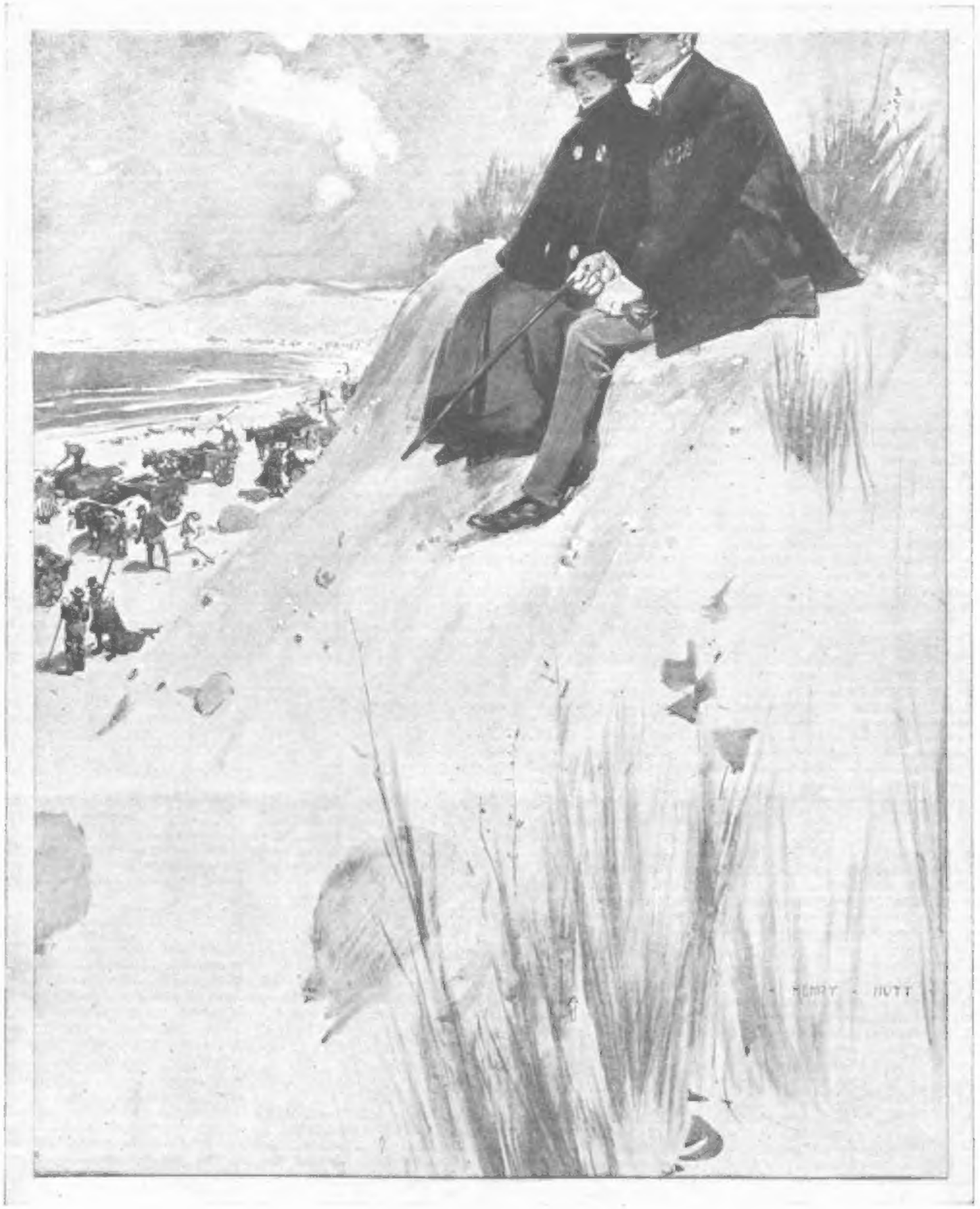
"How is it possible for a man to lead the life your acquaintances in town say you do, and still be the man I know down here,—the man who is unselfish, self-sacrificing and beloved by high and low?"

"Perhaps I have both men in me, although I lay no claim to the latter description," he replied, looking steadily at her. "May I ask what you know about my life in town?"

"Nothing but from hearsay, and that I never trust. What I want you to do is to deny those reports, and set my mind at rest about liking you as much as I could."

•

"I think I know what you mean, Miss Fremont," he replied gravely. "I have heard some rumors myself. They say I am a fast club-man, don't they? That I neglected Mrs. Layton while she lived, and that I drink more than is good for me? To the first I answer, I do belong to several clubs, and have for many years past; also, that some pretty decent men belong to clubs. The second I deny; the third depends upon your standpoint of quantity and capacity. I never was intoxicated but once in my life, and that was twenty years ago. I do drink cocktails at the Hoffman House when I feel so disposed, but I walk right in the front door, and am not ashamed of it, although, as a physician, I think some other form of alcohol would be better for my stomach. Aside from these vices, I have committed the sins of the flesh that most men commit,—but I have never robbed a human being,—I have paid for all I ever had. 'Tis not the record of a hero nor an ideal. I am only the average man, but this I will say: I am not,—in any respect,—the man my enemies in New York proclaim me to be."



"THEY ARE CALLED THE CATTLE, AND COWS ARE CRITTERS"

"I wish you had not told me this. I should have preferred to remain in doubt. How could I admit to my friendship a man who, by his own confession, has lived a life that would condemn me, a woman, to the gutters!" He made no reply. He seemed to be confounded. Finally he spoke.

•

"I allow that what you say is founded on truth and right. If more women felt as you do men would be better; but can you stand out against the world's experience of centuries and demand from men and women moral equality? And do you turn away from your friendship all men who are not as virtuous as you are? You have never had a man's temptations,—you know nothing about the world nor real life. You have lived as protected as a child in a world of your own, peopled with imaginary characters, whose actions you control by laws of ideality, not by human or natural laws. You don't even know what you would do were you tempted. Do you think turning me off will make me a better man, or are you afraid of contamination?" He laughed bitterly as he concluded. "You ought not to know many highly respected gentlemen."

"Please don't take that tone, Doctor Layton. I know I seem inexperienced, and my father says uncharitable, but I must feel respect for my friends, and I cannot respect sin. I might pity you——"

"I don't want your pity," he muttered.

"Men never do when they ask for it. If I could help you in any way I should be glad to do it, but——"

"You can help me, Miss Fremont, merely by permitting me to be near you in our present life. I shall not ask for friendship until you give it freely, but while I am near you I have no desire for any life but that of my country self. My ideal of womanhood was broken long ago. What you have said has restored my faith in the standard of at least one woman. Only let me be near you for two more weeks. Some day if I tell you more about my life you may be able to understand." He took the end of a long blue cape she wore, which just then blew across his shoulders, and pressed it between his hands.

•

"The man who is my friend must at least try to resist temptation," said Louise, who had grown very white. Self-controlled people suffer tortures that are never suspected by the observer.

She seemed to him cold and unresponsive. He pursued the subject no further, but looked at his watch and astonished her by saying they would be late for dinner, including himself, as he had promised Melissa to dine with them. Louise waited for him to say more as they started down the dune, but he was silent until she said gently:

"Doctor Layton, I do not wish to drive you from me, nor to offend you, but my convictions are very strong on certain subjects."

•

"I can only bow to them, Miss Fremont, and try to show my respect for them," he said earnestly, then pointed out a flock of sandpipers, asking if she could see them hopping about on the sand. As they reached the bottom of the dune, Ol came striding toward them with his pitchfork on his shoulder. He exclaimed:

"Ain't this a sight fur you, gurl! I've been at it since midnight an' my jints begin to creek. I'm some tuckered. Them's my folks, pitchin', over yonder. You ain't seen 'em yet. I promised Mrs. Clarke's sure's I was alive I'd bring you an' Doc up to their house this week. Will you go after dinner, both o' you? She's got some mince pie an' black cake 'at can't be bent, an' I'll be through pitchin' in 'bout an hour."

They promised to go, and he strode back to his work, flopping the loose tops of his rubber boots against each other as he walked,—a sound that, during the remainder of her life, recalled that scene and the conversation with Doctor Layton to Louise's mind.

As she saw less well, her hearing seemed to grow more acute; in reality she depended more upon that sense. They talked very little as they rowed up the Breach, Louise sitting on the broad centre seat beside the Doctor, pulling one long oar which he was teaching her to use, but as they landed she said: "I often wish I were more like other people, Doctor Layton. It would be much easier to live without a conscience."

"I am glad you are not," he replied.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

FOUNDED A.D. 1728

WILLIAM GEORGE JORDAN, Editor

THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY

421 TO 427 ARCH STREET, PHILADELPHIA

Christmas Number, 1898

$2.50 per Year by Subscription
5 Cents a Copy at all Newsdealers'

The Crimes of the Tongue

THE second most deadly instrument of destruction is the dynamite gun,—the first is the human tongue. The gun merely kills bodies; the tongue kills reputations and, ofttimes, ruins characters. Each gun works alone; each loaded tongue has a hundred accomplices. The havoc of the gun is visible at once. The full evil of the tongue lives through all the years; even the eye of Omniscience might grow tired in tracing it to its finality.

The crimes of the tongue are words of unkindness, of anger, of malice, of envy, of bitterness, of harsh criticism, gossip, lying and scandal. Theft and murder are awful crimes, yet in any single year the aggregate sorrow, pain and suffering they cause in a nation is microscopic when compared with the sorrows that come from the crimes of the tongue. Place in one of the scale-pans of Justice the evils resulting from the acts of criminals, and in the other the grief and tears and suffering resulting from the crimes of respectability, and you will start back in amazement as you see the scale you thought the heavier shoot high in air.

•

At the hands of thief or murderer few of us in life suffer, even indirectly. But from the careless tongue of friend, the cruel tongue of enemy, who is free? No human being can live a life so true, so fair, so pure as to be beyond the reach of malice, or immune from the poisonous emanations of envy. The insidious attacks against one's reputation, the loathsome innuendoes, slurs, half-lies by which jealous mediocrity seeks to ruin its superiors, are like those insect parasites that kill the heart and life of a mighty oak. So cowardly is the method, so stealthy the shooting of the poisoned thorns, so insignificant the separate acts in their seeming, that one is not on guard against them. It is easier to dodge an elephant than a microbe.

In London they have just formed an Anti-Scandal League. The members promise to combat in every way in their power "the prevalent custom of talking scandal, the terrible and unending consequences of which are not generally estimated."

Scandal is one of the crimes of the tongue, but it is only one. Every individual who breathes a word of scandal is an active stockholder in a society for the spread of moral contagion. He is instantly punished by Nature by having his mental eyes dimmed to sweetness and purity, and his mind deadened to the sunlight and glow of charity. There is developed a wondrous, ingenious perversion of mental vision by which every act of others is explained and interpreted from the lowest possible motives. They become like certain carrion flies, that pass lightly over acres of rose-gardens, to feast on a piece of putrid meat. They have developed a keen scent for the foul matter upon which they feed.

There are pillows wet by sobs; there are noble hearts broken in the silence whence comes no cry of protest; there are gentle, sensitive natures seared and warped; there are old-time friends separated and walking their lonely ways with hope dead and memory but a pang; there are cruel misunderstandings that make all life look dark,—these are but a few of the sorrows that come from the crimes of the tongue.

•

A man or a woman may lead a life of honesty and purity, battling bravely for all they hold dearest, so firm and sure of the rightness of their life that they never think for an instant of the diabolic ingenuity that makes evil and evil report where naught but good really exists. A few words lightly spoken by the tongue of slander, a significant expression of the eyes, a cruel shrug of the shoulders, with a pursing of the lips,—and then, friendly hands grow cold, the accustomed smile is displaced by a sneer, and one stands alone and aloof with a dazed feeling of wonder at the vague, intangible something that has caused it all.

For this craze for scandal sensational newspapers of to-day are largely responsible. Each newspaper is not one tongue, but a thousand or a million tongues, telling the same foul story to as many pairs of listening ears. The vultures of sensationalism scent the carcass of immorality afar off. From the uttermost parts of the earth they collect the sin, disgrace and folly of humanity, and show them bare to the world. They do not even require *facts*, for morbid memories and fertile imaginations make even the worst of the world's happenings seem tame when compared with their monstrosities of invention. These stories, and the discussions they excite, develop in readers a cheap, shrewd power of distortion of the acts of all around them.

If a rich man gives a donation to some charity, they say: "He is doing it to get his name talked about,—to help his business." If he gives it anonymously, they say: "Oh, it's some millionaire who is clever enough to know that refraining from giving his name will pique curiosity; he will see that the public is informed later." If he does not give to charity, they say: "Oh, he's stingy with his money, of course, like the rest of the millionaires." To the vile tongue of gossip and slander Virtue is ever deemed but a mask, noble ideals but a pretense, generosity a bribe.

•

The man who stands above his fellows must expect to be the target for the envious arrows of their inferiority. It is part of the price he must pay for his advance. One of the most detestable characters in all literature is Iago. Envious of the promotion of Cassio above his head, he hated Othello. His was one of those low natures that become absorbed in sustaining his dignity, just as Spain to-day talks of "preserving her honor,"—forgetting it has so long been dead that even embalming could not preserve it. Day by day Iago dropped his poison; day by day did subtle resentment and studied vengeance distill the poison of distrust and suspicion into more powerfully insidious doses. With a mind wonderfully concentrated by the blackness of his purpose, he wove a network of circumstantial evidence around the pure-hearted Desdemona, and then murdered her vicariously, by the hand of Othello. Her very simplicity, confidence, innocence and artlessness made Desdemona the easier mark for Iago.

Iago still lives in the hearts of thousands, who have all his despicable meanness without his cleverness. The constant dropping of their lying words of malice and envy have in too many instances at last worn away the noble reputations of their superiors.

To sustain ourselves in our own hasty judgments we sometimes say, as we listen, and accept without investigation, the words of these modern Iagoes: "Well, where there is so much smoke, there must be *some* fire." Yes, but the fire may be only the fire of malice, the incendiary firing of the reputation of another by the lighted torch of envy, thrown into the innocent facts of a life of superiority.

At this Christmas-tide, when peace and good-will should reign over all the earth, let us not feel we are doing our full duty by making tangible gifts of "presents" to those around us. Let us make this sacred birthday anniversary memorable by renouncing forever the crimes of the tongue, by making to humanity the gift of our life and influence free of the impurity of all evil speaking, and speak, as the Angels of Bethlehem, only "Peace and good-will to men." —THE EDITOR.

EDITOR'S NOTE—On the editorial page of the POST there may sometimes be advanced views and theories which may come to our readers with a sense of novelty. Under the title "Letters from Correspondents" will be given space in early issues of the POST for the full expression of individual opinion, criticism, question and discussion of the editorials. Letters should be limited to two hundred words.

What the New Century Will Bring Us

EVERY now and then one hears of some institution, or sect, or large public organization of one kind or another, which has determined to emphasize the opening of the new century by the raising of a fund,—a determination that will make, if successfully carried out, a very pleasant sort of celebration. It is fair to suppose that these announcements have hardly as yet commenced to come in. A few of the largest sums have, no doubt, been called for, but as the new century draws nearer we may expect that every local charity, no matter how small, will become imbued with the idea of how fine it would be to double its endowment, or at least to add to it a certain number of thousands of dollars, for the beginning of the twentieth century's work.

A statistician who is not frightened by large figures has estimated that the people of the United States may be asked in this way during the next two years for $1,200,000,000. And this, he thinks, may prove a low estimate, since, in addition to the special demand, already certain, for altruistic maintenance and progress, the developments of the last few months have added largely by putting Hawaii, Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines under our own special care.

•

It is worth while, perhaps, to note that the aspirations with which the century's turning-point is filling us so unanimously are very high, and that they indicate a noble conception of the character of the work of the new century. With all the talk of imperialism, and suddenly aroused lust of conquest, there still has been no comment on the coincidence of the coming of the new century and of the Greater United States, no suggestion that there was any fitness or worthiness in our beginning the new epoch with larger responsibility and power.

The two events are considered separately, not in connection; and the universal thought seems to be that the twentieth century is to be one of splendid progress along altruistic, philanthropic and educational lines; that, as the fifteenth made the world larger and the nineteenth has added so wondrously to its luxury and comfort, so the twentieth is to make it better and lead its people upward.

Such, at all events, to judge from the present appearances, is the *purpose* with which we are preparing to begin to write the history of the century that is coming. The one that is closing has witnessed a revolution in our industrial life. Will that which is beginning see as great an advance in our "higher life"? Certainly the mechanism has been wonderfully prepared, the organizations are established, and only the impulse of the century's dawn is awaited. Already its splendor is presaged by the lightening skies, the thrill of hope which life feels all around us, and the rustle of an expectant breath. —CHARLES M. ROBINSON.

A New Expression of Public Sentiment

WHERE is the solver of the political mysteries who can tell us what was the verdict of the voters in the fall elections on the issues alleged to have been involved? Did they vote for expansion? Did they indorse the conduct of the war? Did they redeclare for sound money? Did they register an opinion regarding control by the party boss?

We have had explanations a plenty, but all voicing their spuriousness as plainly as a pewter coin. Each partisan misconstrued the motives of the voters to suit his prejudice. Men who voted for sound money were claimed for expansion. Men who voted primarily for free silver were counted against expansion. Revolt against Platt in New York was construed as a condemnation of the President's post-bellum policy, and rebellion against Croker as an indorsement of the Santiago campaign, or of the postulate that "trade follows the flag."

So full was the air of analyses, explanations, deductions, and yet to the listening ear of the real patriot there came not the faintest sound of the clear vote with which the people of a great Republic should announce their will.

•

Why should not the people vote on the issues of a campaign? Was there any reason why separate ballots and ballot-boxes should not have been provided at every polling place in the United States by which the people could have expressed their views on the question of the Philippines? President McKinley, it is well known, was specially solicitous to obtain such a verdict. It is not too much to say that the entire civilized world would have viewed it with the keenest interest. But out of the mass of conflicting testimony of the votes "for candidates only," no vaguest hint of the truth could be obtained.

The average party platform is composed of half a dozen important planks. The voter, under the present system, must accept all, or none. He often, in this dilemma, is counted in favor of principles to which he is opposed, because among the six planks, to five of which he does not subscribe, is one which seems to him the principal issue of the campaign. Why should he not have the opportunity to vote for his convictions, irrespective of candidates, and to vote separately for each important plank of every platform?

It is not proposed, of course, to give any legal effect to the ballots which might be cast separately on the issues of a campaign, but merely to permit the people to enjoy freedom of opinion as an experimental pastime. Incidentally, of course, the influence would be appreciable in the making of laws and the conduct of government.

The experiment might be initiated in one of several ways: Political parties might suggest it to the voters in convention resolutions; Governors might recommend it; Legislatures might indorse it. The method is not so important as is a change in conditions by which the greatest inconsistency in the nation's politics shall be removed. —FRED NYE.

America's Lesson to the World

THERE is a disposition to undervalue what our country has done for the world, and especially for other civilized nations, during the short history of our independent existence. That we have kept to ourselves rather more than have some other countries is true, but this has not involved any lack of beneficent influence upon the destinies of mankind at large.

We have contributed more than our share in inventions which lighten the burden of human labor, and which increase man's power over Nature. American inventiveness, beginning with Whitney's cotton-gin, Oliver Evans' mill machinery, and Jethro Wood's plow, has changed the conditions of human toil to the gain of workingmen everywhere, substituting brain for muscle, and securing higher remuneration and reduced hours. Our mowers and reapers alone have effected a greater change in farm labor than had been effected in a thousand years before.

The wide diffusion of rapidly created wealth in America, and the consequent tendency to equality of condition among our people, has given a powerful aid to the working classes of the Old World in their efforts to improve their condition. Cobden advised the English workmen to save the price of a passage to America, and to discuss the wages question with their employers with that in their pockets.

•

In the same way, we have aided the common people of Europe in their efforts to secure political rights. Especially the vast sacrifices made by our people for the maintenance of the Union, and the splendid generosity with which the conquered were treated after the war, demonstrated that self-government could bring out in a free people just the qualities which were supposed to be the monopoly of aristocratic and monarchical countries. After that there was a general uplift of the masses into political power, exampled by the establishment of household suffrage in England and the overthrow of imperial rule in France.

The splendid and varied growth of the Christian Church in America has helped to show that religion is not an affair of establishments and endowments, but has the vitality to stand on its own feet in a country in which it is supported by neither legal penalties nor governmental rewards or favors. The growth of church membership at a far faster rate than that of population proves that in the freest field, without pettings of any kind, the religious interest can take care of itself.

The great and willing outlay on public education in America, and the unexampled expenditure of private wealth in creating universities, libraries, art galleries, museums and the like, have encouraged all who are working for popular enlightenment in the Old World. Besides these indirect influences, we have acted directly on other countries for their good. Our Monroe Doctrine has secured the free States of this continent from being parceled out among the great Powers of Europe, as has been done with Africa, and is being done with China. It has thus secured to our sister republics that opportunity to work out their own destinies of which Mexico is taking such splendid advantage.

•

Our peaceful advances opened Japan to Western civilization and progress without the firing of an unfriendly shot. It was in our Roberts College in Constantinople that young Bulgarians, Servians and Armenians received the lessons of nationality and patriotism which are breaking up the Ottoman Empire. The progressive party in Bulgaria were long called "the American party," and not without reason. The American mission at Beirut has created the modern standard of Arabic speech and writing for Western Asia, and laid the foundation of a new literature. Our mission schools in Egypt roused the young Egyptian sentiment, of which Arabi Bey took advantage, and trained the civil servants who make English reforms in administration possible.

Our missionaries in China won Li Hung Chang to the support of Western science by curing his favorite daughter, whose life was despaired of. This led to the creation of the Imperial College for the training of civil servants, and this itself was manned by Americans. Our missionaries lifted Hawaii out of the barbarism to which Captain Cook had fallen a victim, and made those islands Christian.

And we have moved the more freely among the nations on such beneficent missions, because we nowhere came with any ulterior views of conquest and annexation. In the words of Theodore, of Abyssinia, we did not "first send a missionary, and then a consul to look after the missionary, and then an Army to take care of the consul."

During this century past we have lived in the life of all the world, and have supplied as much of the impulse to progress as any other people. —ROBERT ELLIS THOMPSON.

IN TOYLAND

WHERE THE CHILDREN'S PLAYTHINGS ARE MADE

By ELIZA PUTNAM HEATON

ALWAYS the boy had wanted to know why Noah wears a long brown coat and a round hat, why Mrs. Noah and the wives of Shem, Ham and Japheth never change their red, green and buff dresses, why Noah's pigs have longer legs than other pigs, why his doves are without feet, his cows spotted, why his dogs have triangular ears, and his sheep flat sides.

In Nurnberg no one could tell. "They are made so," said the toy dealers.

How, indeed, could one expect greater wisdom in the bustle of a city which holds the lion's share of Germany's toy trade of $12,500,000 a year, and grows as fast as St. Louis, Kansas City, or any Western boom town?

Even in the old Handel Strasse, whose high gabled houses with their stone balconies and curious carvings have looked down since the thirteenth century on processions of knights on foot, with pack trains or in wagons, coming from all over Europe to bargain for play wares and work wares; even in the old headquarters of the toy business, why Noah carries a stick was an enigma.

"Go to Sonneberg" was the only suggestion. "Sonneberg may understand."

"Where is Sonneberg?" the boy queried.

"Sonneberg," said a toy merchant sentimentally, "is Nurnberg's Little Golden Daughter. Away in the Thuringer Wald, in the mountain-circled forest region of the Sachsen-Meiningen Oberland, Sonneberg makes the toys that Nurnberg sells."

"We will go to the Thuringer Wald," said the boy's father. "We will seek the Little Golden Daughter in her hiding place in the mountain-circled wood country, we will ask why the ark has no lower windows."

•

By a spur of a mountain railway one can go in an hour from Coburg to Sonneberg, but who would make a pilgrimage by steam to inquire about Noah? Black firs, sedate, [illegible] browed hemlocks are the trees of the Thuringer Wald. Slender birches seem to cringe in the shadows. Rank growths of ivy hang from the trunks of chestnuts and beeches. From the slopes of Inselberg and Auerhahnkopf to the chain of the Erzgebirge stretch the remains of the Hercynian forest. The northern slopes are the more broken and rugged; in the neighborhood of the Little Golden Daughter the country has smoothed itself somewhat. But passing over the ridge of hills from Coburg, fancy, fed by the words of the toy merchant, seeks a new meaning in the solemn processions of long shanked pines that march along the cliff tops, and in the stiff regularity of the plantations of baby firs, disposed in straight, green rows against the hillsides.

The boy surveys them and seems revolving an idea. He turns suspiciously to a group of red-and-white houses, placed with the quaint formality of a play village. Furtively he glances at a little old man who carries a stick and wears a long brown greatcoat of a wonderfully familiar shade.

He cannot take his eyes from the man's round hat of green felt until he notices that the dog at the man's heels has sharp, triangular ears. Startled by this discovery, he gazes with open distrust at a flock of geese driven past by a peasant woman. The geese seem much like other geese, but

"They walk two and two," cries the boy, "like Noah's!"

The gooseherd wears a short petticoat that hangs in straight folds, thick at the waist as the folds of a fan. Her face is wooden in its lack of expression. Her hat is of gray felt, shaped like the man's.

•

[illegible]ouse is in sight with no windows on the first floor. The boy nods at it as a link in a chain of evidence. Then there appears [illegible]rch for all the world like a time stained ark with the paint washed off and [illegible]s a steeple.

From a path leading down the hillside [illegible]file sober, slow-paced cows. Some of them [illegible]re blotched and spotted, others of a blackish red, almost as favorably known to toy barnyards. The boy's eyes dance. He recites:

"Little chicks and spotted cow
Shall we keep here or no?"

"You can play almost all Grimm's fairy tales with Noah's animals," he pronounces.

With the cows are a few lank, serious-minded goats. "Do you see?" he cries. "Aren't they,—they are flat sided!"

The peasants wear long, brownish coats and walk with a stiff slowness. They do not speak, they scarcely lift their grave faces. The boy can no longer contain himself.

Every Christmas they pack 'em!" he exclaims.

Sonneberg is the capital of Toyland.

Sonneberg made Noah's arks in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It supplied ammunition weapons to child soldiers before the Thirty Years War. For a century and more its toy peddlers, with their great pack baskets, have been familiar figures at the Christmas fairs in half the cities of Germany.

•

As early as 1820 Sonneberg dealt in paper-mache elephants and grandmothers dressed in swaddling clothes. By 1850 Sonneberg dolls were learned enough to say "papa" and "mamma." In 1878 Sonneberg was making wax dolls. In 1878 washable dolls were migrating from the Thuringer Wald, to be kissed and cuddled by little mothers of all nationalities.

Of recent years the toy trade has grown immensely, and the quaint little town, which twenty years ago had less than five thousand inhabitants, has more than doubled in size, and presides over no fewer than thirty distinct branches of toy manufacture. Because of its importance to children [illegible]rg has both a United States Consul [illegible] and Deputy Consul. New churches have gone up, and a brand new Government building. Five big factories have been built to supply the demand for porcelain dolls' heads and rubber dolls, and the methods of the toy industry are being revolutionized.

Sonneberg makes the skin animals which are dominated by an unimaginative generation, but wooden animals also, the Little Golden Daughter's old specialty, are made in greater numbers than ever. The visitor to Sonneberg is not a tourists' town, finds wareroom after wareroom filled with lots of quadrupeds and bipeds, some the rude work of children, others elaborately carved.

The cattle on a thousand hills are less numerous. The braying of the donkeys, the quacking of the geese, would make pandemonium. The flocks of sheep would feed armies,—and Toyland's are the largest in the world. When the Spanish-American War began she mobilized myriads of Lilliputian soldiers, and has not disbanded a regiment.

At Sonneberg there still lives the gallant nut-cracker of Hans Andersen's fable, with his stiff pigtail and powerful jaw. There, too, can be found the cock that flew to the top of the house and stopped crowing, but turns constantly on one leg to see which way the wind blows.

Millions of dolls, from two inches to three feet high, fulfill doll destiny by marrying and settling in toy houses. Furniture for these establishments, together with wagons, shops, and trade implements to set up in business their masters, the boy dolls, is turned out by the ton. Last year, in return for Christmas offerings from the Little Golden Daughter and her kinsmen, the United States sent $2,750,000, and Great Britain sent $4,250,000 to Toyland.

•

From Sonneberg itself, or from Koppelsdorf or Lauscha—any place in its neighborhood,—take one of the little paths by which at evening the sheep and goats come down. It may lead up and up through the woods, or across rocky pastures to the top of a gray, smooth walled bluff, whence there is an outlook over the valleys.

At last one comes to a little house, black and winter-beaten. In its doorway sits a man at a turning lathe. His foot moves up and down automatically, his eyes follow the cutting tool. He appears not to notice the strangers, but an older man and a couple of children, who are at work out of doors, permit the boy to stand over their gouges and chisels. When the boy sees the shavings, and the little figures of men and women that lie about his eyes seem starting from his head.

Can toy people make toys?

The old man, whose face is time worn as the house itself, is roughing out tiny figures of Noah and the seven from little blocks of soft pine. He works without guide or pattern, he has never had a lesson in drawing or anatomy; but it is wonderful with what rapidity and cleverness he turns out little men and women as uniform as if run through a mould. He wears, when about his work, a pointed cap like a wood goblin's.

•

With infinite gravity all the children perform their share of the whittling and gouging, the youngest, a red faced, white-haired urchin called Bobbel, confining his efforts to rubbing down the completed Noahs with soft strips of leather roughened with sand. Bobbel has an accomplishment.

"Crow, Bobbel," says the toymaker, and Bobbel, standing on a rock, flaps his arms and emits a weird note, like a rooster of great age and dignity.

The children pick out of the refuse some of Bobbel's best efforts at carving—clumsy, with no faces, and hoofless asses. For a few pfennigs the boy possesses himself of the caricatures of Noah. Bobbel swells with solemn pride at the sale.

Balancing one of the comical little figures on his hand, the old toymaker says, "Soon Bobbel will work more junktich."

"Why does Noah carry a stick?" the boy inquires; but the toymaker answers with a puzzled sobriety.

"Always the puppen have been as I make them. My father made the puppen, and my father's father."

"Why does Noah wear a long brown coat?" asks the boy.

"Always his coat is long," says the toymaker, resentful of the suggestion that any other garb would be possible. "The frauen," he adds, "do the painting."

•

One of the frauen comes from the house a sturdy young woman who wears seven aprons. Smilingly she listens to the boy's eager questions, but for Noah's long brown coat, or Mrs. Noah's buff and green, or for the little dots of faces she has no explanation. "Always," she says, "are they colored so for the Arche."

The boy glances from her short, thick plaited skirt to the little figures, he would have liked a complete correspondence in it he seems to have some inkling of an explanation.

Bobbel looks on with silent disapproval while the boy chooses puppen, white and colored, of a better type than his. "It is little money we see," says the toymaker. "In the old days my father traveled to Nurnberg with his baskets, in these times Herr Friedmann pays little."

•

"Herr Friedmann!" the boy repeats.

"The work is done for the dealers in Sonneberg."

Do you make the lion or the elephant?" demands the insatiate questioner.

"My father and I make only the puppen," the toymaker returns stiffly, and, indeed, Noah and the seven are responsibility enough for one family.

Bobbel points the way to a larger and newer house, whose wood, not yet fully darkened, shows the streaks of its battles with the rains. Here only women are visible,—a ruddy faced hausmutter, who works like the toymaker, at little blocks of moist wood, a girl of eighteen, and a little, old woman of seventy wrinkled as a withered pear. The grandmother gives an odd chuckle of enjoyment at the interest displayed in the coarse face she is making.

"It is stronger," she says, in her sweet, shrill voice, "than the machine mad."

The hausmutter's glances invite praise of her neat establishment. Her husband, she says, is a real wood carver. He does not make toys, but picture frames, jewel cases, bread platters, and even chairs and large furniture. But this is on rainy days, and in the winter. In summer there is the work in the fields.

Lisschen, the young girl, who has a fair red and white complexion, is more clever with the tools than her mother. Camels, sheep, lions and pigs are the family specialties. Until recently it has not been usual for a family to have so many. "Some people," says Lisschen, with conscious superiority, "make only one kind of animal."

•

"Why are the sheep flat sided?" asks the boy with trepidation. Past experiences have destroyed his confidence. But Lisschen answers good humoredly.

"It is the custom, always we make them so."

"And the pigs, their legs are long?"

Doubtfully the boy glances at a group of black swine lying on their sides, as if after play some one had thrown them down. But from the shadows of the trees come three or four at a gallop. In a tone of satisfaction and discovery, the boy repeats: "Their legs are [illegible]."

Lisschen delights the boy by rubbing down for him a prancing horse, carved out of ash wood. "There's never a wood lad can equal that," she says, her fingers passing lovingly over its lines.

Bobbel pops out of a hazel thicket, trailing a switch tipped with a pale cotton streamer. He had picked up a big white dog to keep him company. The pair sedately head the procession to other little eyries, where other industries are in progress. To making which the erection of the factories causes to centre more and more in Sonneberg itself, is still, as to its simpler branches, largely a cottage industry.

In the cottages, small, painted wooden dolls receive red shoes and white stockings, and cheeks and lips of carmine. Clothing for a swarming population of dolls is cut at the factories, and carried home by the basket-load to be made by women and children. Some of the outfits completed by these dolls' dressmakers are meagre, others much decorated with lace and tinsel. A trousseau for a big doll causes a flutter of excitement.

"But those come," says one of the Jennie Wrens, "after Christmas."

"Why after Christmas?" is the inquiry.

"When Christmas is over, the dealers know what gifts have pleased the children," replies the doll's dressmaker. "As soon as the candles on the tree have burned out, preparations begin for the next Christmas. Winter is Sonneberg's busy season."

•

In the workshops the boy bestows his attention on the hobby horse, and the painting of small, wooden carts, and of Noah's arks of all sizes. Before a big Noah's ark he pauses. The painter, a bright lad in his teens, lays on the colors with as much decision as if he had been present at the launching of the original model. But as to the colors he can offer only the now threadbare explanation. "Always the Arche is like this; always we make them so."

A group of peasants pass on their way out of Sonneberg, grave wooden figures. The boy glances from them to the red and white houses. "You must see for yourself," he [illegible] "toy people can't tell about toys."

But at the present rate of growth, Sonneberg's people are fast becoming very real modern people, and soon there will be nothing left of the old race of toy folk,—nothing to tell the hows or whys of the toys.

•••

TOLD AFTER DINNER

••

His First Acquaintance With the Town

PHILANDER was once chatting with Senator Shirley, of Maine, and remarked upon the fact that he (Nye) was born at Shirley, in the Senator's State, adding that the town had doubtless been named for one of the Senator's [illegible].

"I didn't know," said the Senator, "if there was such a town in Maine as Shirley."

"I didn't know it, either," said Nye, "until I was born there."

•

When the Blow Fell

A YOUNG married lady one morning gave her husband a sealed letter, which he was to read when he got to his office. He did so, and the letter ran as follows:

> "I am obliged to tell you something that may give you pain, but there is no help for it. You shall know everything, whatever be the consequences. For the last week I have felt that it must come to this, but I have waited until the last extremity, and can remain silent no longer. Do not overwhelm me with bitter reproach, for you will have to put up with your share of the trouble as well as myself."

Cold perspiration stood in thick drops on the brow of the husband, who was prepared for the worst. Tremblingly he read on:

> "Our coal is all gone. Please order a ton to be sent this afternoon. I thought you might forget it for the tenth time, and therefore wrote you this letter."

But he didn't forget it that time.

•

He Bore His Loss in Silence

THE following episode happened at the recent brilliant charge of the Twenty-first Lancers, at the fall of Omdurman.

One of the men got his thumb cut off, and turning to his chum, an Irishman, ejaculated:

"Whatever shall I do? I'm done for life."

Pat, taking things somewhat coolly, and thinking his chum was making a fuss over a mere trifle, responded solemnly:

"Begorra, that's nothin' to make a fuss about, here's poor Sam Jones wid his head cut off, an' not a word is he sayin'."

•

On Speaking Terms With His Food

A THEATRICAL man recently told the following story about Fritz Williams. The old actor was one day sitting in a fashionable New York restaurant when two young men came in. They were fearfully bored with living, and all that sort of thing, and they beckoned condescendingly to a waiter.

"Waiter," said one, "bring me a chop. Just mention my name to the cook."

"You may bring me a steak," said the other, "and tell the cook who it's for."

The waiter was half way across the room when Fritz Williams hailed him.

"Waiter," he drawled, "bring me half a dozen Blue Points, and mention my name to every darned oyster."

LEGENDS OF THE CHILD WHO IS KING

By GEORGE HORACE LORIMER

Drawing by CHARLES LOUIS HINTON

I

The Child and the Weak

ON A TIME when Rupert the Good King reigned over the City in the Forests, he decreed that, throughout all his realm there should be no sorrow nor lack of cheer on Christmas Day.

For be it known that at the Christmas time the Christ Child comes down to earth and passes from house to house, bringing joy and peace to the poor and lowly. And always on that day sat the King among his knights, waiting in state for the coming of the Child, that he might do Him honor and reverence. And always it befell that night found him sad and silent because the Child had passed him by. For ever to the poor and lowly came the Christ and in the City of the Forests there were many.

Now it being again the eve of Christmas the King sent his servants through the City giving to all of his bounty, that none might be without the comfort and the cheer of the holy time. For he reasoned that if there were no sorrow to stay the Child as He passed through the City, He would come at last to the Castle. And Rupert made ready the Court to receive Him and never was braver sight seen in all Christendom.

Now there was in the King's household a Jester of most excellent wit, who made much seemly diversion for his master. And he, being on the streets on Christmas Eve, playing divers merry tricks on the simple people, and chanced upon a boy making a loud outcry. For he had wandered off from the monastery where the good fathers cared for the homeless and knew not the way thither again. Him quieted the Jester with fair words, and brought him secretly to the Castle, and locked him in a chamber in the tower, where none went, and there left him sleeping. For he thought to clothe him in the motley on the morrow, and thereby make a merry jest for all the little children of the Court.

•

Full soon the midnight bells, that through the year tolled out the passing days, rang joyously, and all the City was radiant with the Star. Upon the hills the sheep in slow procession wended and in their stalls the oxen fell upon their knees, and Heaven and Earth sang one harmonious song of praising the Child.

Right proudly in his hall did Rupert upon his head a crown of gold and o'er his royal the Royal robe of purple. And at his back were threescore valiant knights in shining armor clad. Through all the night they sat there, still and silent, and when the dawn stole in with it found them waiting. Then sang the white throng to the angel mounting up, the Child like the Boy, that to the night had slept unharmed. Long lay he still and listened, and once he called aloud but there was none to answer back. For the Star was but a light low and overnight had forgotten.

And now the Boy grew frightened, and, standing up, looked out into the Court. Across the way he gazed into a room where all the children of the Castle stood round a noble fir, full fair with glittering toys and shining lights. To them called "Oh children, come for me that I may play around the tree", but there was none to hear, so loud they sang their praises.

Down to the ledge a sparrow flew, and looked at wondering at the Boy. "Oh sparrow, stay with me," he cried. "For I am afraid", but quick the bird flew off for everywhere were crumbs thrown out for him.

Then to the snowflakes, scurrying by, the Boy called out. "Fly not so fast away, oh, snowflakes, stay here a while with me." But whirled they on the faster for in every window were there sights to see.

•

And now the Boy was grieved, that he alone in all the city was forgotten. But of a sudden, above the chanting of the choir, he heard a voice that called his name, and wondering, turned and saw that all the grayness of the granite walls was yellowed into gold, and in a corner stood a tree that glittered with a thousand lights. But, best of all, he saw a little Child who smiled and beckoned him with rosy fingers. And all that day they played together.

Slow dragged the day along, but to the waiting King the Child came not. [illegible] evening fell, [illegible] star mounted up [illegible] and hung above the low [illegible]

[illegible] yet was luminous with life [illegible], and, floating upward to the Star [illegible] see the hosts of Heaven bearing up the Child. And black- [illegible] wondering knight, and [illegible] Not spake the King [illegible] brand faded from the [illegible] and struck [illegible] knights clanked after [illegible] the tremblin Jester crawled [illegible] and, around and up the snaky [illegible] rang to his trailing steel [illegible] round, around and up past [illegible] row slits let in the stor [illegible] air in cold and dark and now there sounded in his ears the fearsome hooting of an owl [illegible] circled on ghastly w[illegible]

[illegible] room. A moment paused he [illegible] his marked hand beat the [illegible]

"Open!" he cried. "It is the King" [illegible] the vaulted ceilings echoed [illegible] "O—pen—it—is—the—King"! but from within there came no answering cry.

Then to the oak he put his strapping shoulder and sent it crashing in, and forward stepped, but half across the threshold stayed [illegible]

[illegible] on the floor, a tired boy lay sleeping, upon his ruddy face a smile, and in the room the radiance lingered.

Wroth was the King that one the meanest of his serfs, had been preferred to him [illegible] he so shamed before his knights. And storming in his anger o'er the lad, he thought to [illegible] roughly on his dreams and ask what did he there. But in between him and the Boy was stretched a hand, and [illegible] it were the prints of nails. And as he looked upon that wounded hand, his pride and wrath were melted into tears, and catching up the sleeping Boy, he turned and passed down through his knights. And when he reached the empty hall, a little Child came running out to meet him, and lo! it was the Christ.

• • •

II

The Child and the Strong

A New Telling of an Old Legend

IN ALL the East [illegible] was known [illegible] strong as Offero the Giant. Among men he was as an oak in a growth of saplings. Hard and knotted was his thick trunk, sinewy and gnarled were his mighty limbs. Even in his youth, no man could stand against him; but the children climbed fearless upon his knee.

Now when Offero was become a man, the fame of his strength reached the ears of the King of the Plains, and he sent messengers commanding that the Giant should enter into his service. And having to choose what he should do with his life, Offero reasoned thus:

The strength of man is twofold,—that of the body and that of the mind; and it is written that the one shall be the servant of the other. The King is mighty [illegible] there is one greater beyond the hills, to whom he renders tribute. To him, then, will I go, for as mine is the strongest body, so will I serve only the strongest mind among men, the mightiest ruler in the world, the King of Kings." And bidding the messengers return to their master, he fared [illegible] seeking the King beyond the hills, to whom the whole world paid tribute.

•

To him he came at last, and at his feet he laid his sword. And as he gazed about him at the brave show of the Court, he felt that he had found a worthy master.

Right glad was the great King to have a giant of such noble strength in his household, and always Offero stood beside the throne and

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 314)

THE BEST POEMS IN THE WORLD

Singing Of The Magnificat

LIX

By E. NESBIT

With a Drawing and Decoration by LEYENDECKER

IN MIDST of wide green pasture-lands, cut through
By lines of alders bordering deep-banked streams,
Where bulrushes and yellow iris grew,
And rest and peace, and all the flowers of dreams,
The Abbey stood,—so still, it seemed a part
Of the marsh-country's almost pulseless heart.

Where gray-green willows fringed the stream and pool,
The lazy, meek-faced cattle strayed to graze;
Sheep in the meadows cropped the grasses cool,
And silver-fish shone through the watery ways,
And many a load of fruit and load of corn
Into the Abbey storehouses was borne.

Yet though so much they had of life's good things,
The monks but held them as a sacred trust,
Lent from the storehouse of the King of Kings
Till they, His stewards, should go back to dust.
"Not as our own," they said, "but as the Lord's,
All that the stream yields, or the land affords."

•

And all the villages and hamlets near
Knew the monks' wealth, and how their wealth was spent.
In tribulation, sickness, want or fear,
First to the Abbey all the peasants went,
Certain to find a welcome, and to be
Helped in the hour of their extremity.

When plague or sickness smote the people sore,
The Brothers prayed beside the dying bed,
And nursed the sick back into health once more,
And through the horror and the danger said:
"How good is God, who has such love for us,
He lets us tend His suffering children thus!"

They in their simple ways and works were glad.
Yet all men must have sorrows of their own.
And so a bitter grief the Brothers had,
Not mourned for other's heaviness alone.
This was the secret of their sorrowing,
That not a monk in all the house could sing!

•

Was it the damp air from the lonely marsh,
Or strain of scarcely intermitted prayer,
That made their voices, when they sang, as harsh
As any frog's that croaks in evening air,—
That made less music in their hymns to lie
Than in the hoarsest wild-fowl's hoarsest cry?

If love could sweeten voice to sing a song,
Theirs had been sweetest song was ever sung;
But their hearts' music reached their lips all wrong,
The soul's intent foiled by the traitorous tongue
That marred the chapel's peace, and seemed to scare
The rapt devotion lingering in the air.

The birds that in the chapel built their nests,
And in the stone-work found their small lives fair,
Flew thence with hurried wings and fluttering breasts
When rang the bell to call the monks to prayer.
"Why will they sing," they twittered, "why at all?
In Heaven their silence must be festival!"

•

The Brothers prayed, with penance and with tears,
That God would let them give some little part
Out for the solace of their own sad ears
Of all the music crowded in their heart.
Their nature and the marsh air had their way,
And still they sang more vilely every day.

And all their prayers and fasts availing not
To give them voices sweet, their souls' desire,
The Abbot said: "Gifts He did not allot
God at our hands will not again require;
The love He gives us He will ask again
In love to Him and to our fellow-men.

"Praise Him we must, and since we cannot praise
As we would choose, we praise Him as we can.
In Heaven we shall be taught the angels' ways
Of singing,—we can afford to wait a span.
In singing, as in toil, do ye your best;
God will adjust the balance,—do the rest."

But one good Brother, anxious to remove
This the reproach now laid on them so long,
Rejected counsel, and for very love
Besought a Brother, skilled in art of song
To come to them,—his cloister far to leave,—
And sing Magnificat on Christmas Eve.

So when each brown monk duly sought his place,
By two and two, slow pacing to the choir,
Shrined in his dark oak stall, the strange monk's face
Shone with a light as of devotion's fire.
Good, young and fair, his seemed a form wherein
Pure beauty left no room at all for sin.

•

And when the time for singing it had come,
"Magnificat," face raised, and voice, he sang;
Each in his stall the monks stood glad and dumb,
As through the chancel's dusk his voice outrang,
Pure, clear and perfect,—as the thrushes sing
Their first impulsive welcome of the spring.

At the first notes the Abbot's heart spoke low:
"O God, accept this singing, seeing we,
Had we the power, would ever praise Thee so,—
Would ever, Lord, Thou know'st, sing thus for Thee;
Thus in our hearts Thy hymns are ever sung,
As he Thou blessest sings them with his tongue."

But as the voice rose higher, and more sweet,
The Abbot's heart said: "Thou hast heard us grieve,
And sent an angel from beside Thy feet,
To sing Magnificat on Christmas Eve;
To ease our ache of soul, and let us see
How we some day in Heaven shall sing to Thee."

•

Through the cold Christmas night the hymn rang out,
In perfect cadence, clear as sunlit rain,—
Such heavenly music that the birds without
Beat their warm wings against the window pane,
Scattering the frosted crystal snow outspread
Upon the stone-lace and the window lead.

The white moon through the window seemed to gaze
On the pure face and eyes the singer raised;
The storm-wind hushed the clamor of its ways;
God seemed to stoop to hear Himself thus praised,
And breathless all the Brothers stood, and still
Reached longing souls out to the music's thrill.

GOOD, YOUNG AND FAIR, HIS SEEMED A FORM WHEREIN PURE BEAUTY LEFT NO ROOM AT ALL FOR SIN

Old years came back, and half-remembered hours,
Dreams of delights that never were to be,
Mothers' remembered kiss, the funeral flowers
Laid on the grave of life's felicity;
An infinite clear passion of regret
Swept through their hearts, and left their eyelids wet.

The birds beat ever at the window, till
They break the pane, and so could entrance win;
Their slender feet clung to the window-sill,
And though with them the bitter air came in,
The monks were glad that the birds too should hear,
Since to God's creatures all His praise is dear.

The lovely music waxed and waned, and sank,
And brought less conscious sadness in its train,
Unrecognized despair that thinks to thank
God for joy renounced, a chosen pain,—
And deems that peace which is but stifled life
Dulled by a too-prolonged unfruitful strife.

•

When service done, the Brothers gathered round
To thank the singer,—modest-eyed, said he:
"Not mine the grace, if grace indeed abound;
God gave the power, if any power there be;
If I in hymn or psalm clear voice can raise,
As His the gift, so His be all the praise!"

That night,—the Abbot lying on his bed,—
A sudden flood of radiance on him fell,
Poured from the crucifix above his head,
And cast a storm of light across his cell,—
And in the fullest fervor of the light
An angel stood, glittering and great and white.

His wings a thousand rainbow clouds seem'd made,
A thousand lamps of love shone in his eyes,
The light of dawn upon his brows was laid,
Odors of thousand flowers of Paradise
Filled all the cell, and through the heart there stirred
A sense of music that could not be heard.

•

The angel spoke,—his voice was low and sweet
As the sea murmur on low-lying shore,—
Or whisper of the wind in ripened wheat:
"Brother," he said, "the God we both adore
Has sent me down to ask, is all not right?—
Why was Magnificat not sung to-night?"

Trances in the joy the angel's presence brought,
The Abbot answered: "All these weary years
We have sung our best,—but always have we thought
Our voices were unworthy Heavenly ears;
And so to-night we found a clearer tongue,
And by it the Magnificat was sung."

The angel answered: "All these happy years
In Heaven has your Magnificat been heard;
This night alone the angels' listening ears
Of all its music caught not a single word.
Say, who is he whose goodness is not strong
Enough to bear the burden of his song?"

•

The Abbot named his name. "Ah, why," he cried,
"Have angels heard not what we found so dear?"
"Only pure hearts," the angel's voice replied,
"Can carry human songs up to God's ear;
To-night in Heaven was missed the sweetest praise
That ever rises from earth's mud-stained maze.

"The monk who sang Magnificat is filled
With lust of praise, and with hypocrisy;
He sings for earth,—in Heaven his notes are stilled
By muffling weight of deadening vanity;
His heart is chained to earth, and cannot bear
His singing higher than the listening air!

"From purest hearts most perfect music springs,
And while you mourned your voices were not sweet,
Marred by the accident of earthly things,—
In Heaven, God, listening, judged your song complete.
The sweetest of earth's music came from you,
The music of a noble life and true!"

An Old Time English Christmas

IN TOWN AND COUNTRY AT YULE-TIDE. *By Alister Burford*

WHEN the night ended and the day began no man could tell; for over London lay the fog. Dank and dun, it blotted out the houses; dense and impenetrable, it barred the streets. The lamps along the road glowed sickly yellow in the smother, and here and there a smudge of red showed where a candle flared.

Through the muffled air the shouts and cries of the venturesome came strangely hollow, and their footsteps echoed in the empty streets as if they trod the flags beneath arched cloisters. With outstretched hands the city groped through all the morning, and every greeting was an imprecation.

But on toward noon the fog began to lighten, and bit by bit the sun fought through. Then came the wind, and the last drifting scud blew into shreds. It brought a snap and sparkle to the dead air,—a frosty nip, that rapid walking turned to tingling warmth.

The people rubbed their eyes and looked about them. Then, reassured that London town had not been spirited away by the genii of the fog, with one accord they reached for wicker baskets and started out. For in those good old days, when steam was but the waste of housewives' kettles, before the world turned topsy-turvy, the buying of the Christmas cheer was no light thing. Then were there twelve long days of merrymaking, and honest men had honest appetites.

As the night drew on the streets became more thronged. In every window candles twinkled; in every room a cheerful blaze danced in the grate, and sent out ruddy streams of light into the dusk. And everywhere was holly hung, and mistletoe.

* * *

Fat turkeys and lean turkeys, Falstaffian gobblers in all the bronze glory of their feathers, and plump hen-turkeys, picked clean to the white skin; rotund turkeys which had gorged the autumn away in Norfolk farmyards, and lean, blue birds which had scratched out a precarious livelihood on barren moors; turkeys piled high on every stall, and swinging head down from rows of hooks; turkeys before, behind, on both sides, wherever the eye rested; tons of turkeys, hills of turkeys, mountains of turkeys,—that was Leadenhall Market on Christmas Eve. Nor was there lack of unctuous geese and Dorking fowl, of spicy brawn in rolls, and good roast beef in great, thick joints, the firm red flesh streaked and o'erlaid with yellow fat, all gay with greens and streaming ribbons, to fit the hearty tastes of hearty times.

In and around the shops and stalls surged the whole quarter, jostling, crowding, pinching thin turkeys, prodding fat turkeys, and smelling suspicious-looking turkeys. There were round-paunched old papas, red-faced and jolly, dragging wondering children along on either side, with a porter, bowed under a roomy hamper, following on behind; there were fat old housewives, smiling all down their shining faces to their double chins, waddling from stall to stall, intent on the one great business of the moment.

On every side there rose the sound of bargaining, buying and selling, the shouts and laughter of the children, and the more staid greetings of their elders. And here and there were ragged men and boys who cried out sheets of Christmas carols; and from a corner came the wheezing of a broken violin, and the cracked voices of some frowsy waits bawling out the good old

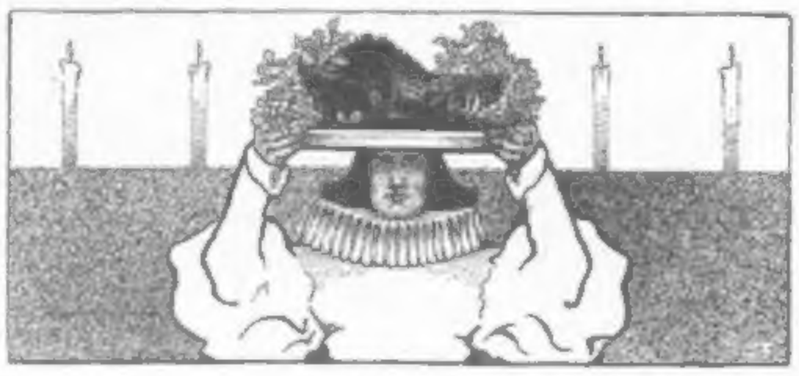
"God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ, our Saviour,
Was born on Christmas Day."

From end to end, the market smacked of Christmas. There was a breath of it in the pleasant smells that floated out from the shops where the fruiterers were entrenched behind barricades of oranges and apples and grapes and lemons; there was a jingle of it in the rattle of the canisters from which the grocers were weighing out the spices for the morrow's pudding; there was a suggestion of it in the piled-up sweetness of candied fruits and figs and plums; and everywhere there was the certainty of it in the greens.

* * *

At precisely one minute before ten the coachee of "the Fastflyer" came out of the tap-room of "The Bell and Hand," wiping his mouth on the back of a stubby paw, and gave a stolid stare around the inn yard. He was a short, stocky man, whom a swaddling greatcoat of rough blue stuff, with bright brass buttons, and a low-crowned hat, in which was stuck a sprig of holly, made shorter and stockier still. His face,—what little of it showed below the hat, and above a gaudy "neckerchief,"—was veined and mottled red, like a map of an extensive system of lakes and rivers. And as he waddled toward the coach, he was surrounded by an admiring circle of stable-boys, and preceded and followed by a smell of gin.

The horses, with two hostlers at the heads of the leaders, were already in their places; the four insides, wrapped in traveling shawls, were snuggled down in theirs; and the outsides, a fine, bluff, jolly old gentleman, to whom the coachee touched his hat deferentially, and three well-built, frank-faced schoolboys, were running back and forth alongside.



The top of the coach was covered and piled with boxes, baskets and hampers, and the guard and two porters were still stowing things away in impossible corners of the boot. There were barrels of oysters and hampers of game; there were hares and turkeys and geese swinging from convenient hooks. From a basket on top, the head of a great turbot stuck up and glared stonily at the snout of a stiff and stark sucking-pig that poked out from another.

"Up you go, now, young gentlemen," cried out coachee at last, and the three schoolboys bounced to the top like India-rubber balls. Up went the old gentleman, puffing and blowing, and then the coachee, with surprising agility, jumped into his seat, just as the guard stowed the last bundle in the boot.

*

"Give 'em their 'eads, 'Arry," called the guard; and he grasped his horn.

There was a sudden shuffling of hoofs, and the hostlers fell back; there was a tightening of reins, and the leaders began to prance; there was a crack of the long-lashed whip, and the coach was off. Away they went, to the blast of the horn, hurtling along through the half-fog of the morning, and meaner vehicles turned from their way. Away they went, out of the smoke and soot of the city, along the winding country roads, where the air came clear and clean over the freshly fallen snow. Away they went, past lanes and hedges, down a long slope, over an old arched bridge, and past a churchyard, where the rough gray stones were stuck through the snow at queer, unsteady angles.

And now the shrill horn piped the entrance to a village. To every gate ran the housemaid and the cook, and giggled, and simpered, and cried "Oh, lor'!" as the coachee winked at one and leered at the other. From every ale-house the loungers came out and stared in stupid wonder at the charging coach.

Outside the village, the coachee eased his horses down and turned half out to let a mad procession by. Three old post-chaises, packed full of home-bound schoolboys, came racing up, the postboys standing in their stirrups and lashing the lean old brutes beneath them. With flags streaming, trumpets blowing, missiles flying, they came on, leaning far out the windows, and waving their caps. A sudden shower of missiles, a yell of "*Dulce domum!*" and they were past.

So sped the miles away, until at last the steaming horses drew up on their haunches before the Abbey Inn.

From the Abbey Inn to the Manor House, where the fine old gentleman lived, the pair of shaggy ponies, which had been standing waiting for him, frisked and romped in no time at all.

"Hooray!" cried the lads in chorus, as the panting ponies stopped. And then the stout hall door flew open, and out burst a merry throng, blown on a gale of shouts and laughter. From mother to grandmother, from sister to brother, from uncle to aunt, from cousin to second cousin, the lads were bandied about and hugged, until they cried "Enough!" and squirmed themselves free.

From room to room, greeting the servants and admiring the greens, from stables to kennels, patting the horses and petting the pawing dogs, they ran through all the afternoon. But with the twilight, they came trooping to the spacious hall, where their elders were sitting in the deepening dusk.

*

Then the fine old gentleman, looking rosier and jollier than ever, advanced on the blackness of the yawning fireplace, holding tenderly in one hand a charred fragment of last year's Yule log. With this, that custom might be satisfied, he kindled a blaze that curled up and licked the rough bark of the good oak log. And soon the leaping flame lit all the hall, and danced back from the time-stained oak that wainscoted the walls.

Wax candles now were lit in every room, and from the farms around the tenantry came in, the men all stiff and jointless in their Sunday best, the women simpering.

Squeak, squeak! the fiddler was tuning up. Twang, twang! the harper was testing his strings, and impatient toes began to tap the floor. Then both together, in an ambitious flourish, and, at the head of the set, the silk-stockinged calves of the jolly old gentleman stepped in and out in gay anticipation.

Already the children were making merry. Unchecked by any frowning elder, a boisterous game of hoodman blind was in full swing, and a dozen youngsters were burning their fingers at snap-dragon or sousing their curly heads at bob-apple.

And so with games and dancing the evening wore away, until the butler staggered in under a great bowl of wassail, from which a spicy steam wreathed up. Then came more dancing and games and singing, and at last, when every one was hungry and breathless, the jolly old gentleman led a fierce charge on a supper of cold fowl and beef, of venison pasties and pigeon and mince pies, with steaming punch or brown October ale, to wash it down. Nor did a guest get up to go, nor a sleepy child submit to being led away, until the bells chimed out for Christmas morning.

(CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 412)

watched lest some traitor seek to do his master despite.

There came, one day, a wandering minstrel, singing the lay of the mighty. And always in his song one name recurred,—the name of Satan; and each time it was uttered, the King and all the Court grew pale.

Now Offero was of a paynim people, and knew naught of the Christ, nor of Apollyon the Enemy; but when he saw his master blench and cross himself, forthwith he asked:

"Who is this Satan, then, whose name brings fear?"

And when none answered him, he strode forth from the hall, crying: "There is a greater than the King; him will I seek and serve."

Across the parched desert, through the black forest, by the gray sea and the blue hills, he sought this mightier than the King; nor rested he until at last he stood before the Fiend. To him he bent the knee.

Right joyously the King of Evil welcomed him. And many were the battles that they fought and great the victories that they gained.

It happened on a day that, by a wayside well, they paused to rest and drink. Above the stone there was a cross of wood. And when he saw the cross, Satan fell down and groveled abject in the dust.

Wondering, Offero asked the cause of his dismay, and learned that on the cross one Jesus Christ had died, yet, conquering Death and Hell, had risen from the grave, and reigned supreme. And when he saw that Satan dared not drink because of that triumphant cross, the Giant spoke up boldly:

"Here will we part. I seek the King of Kings; Him only will I serve."

So went he forth once more, seeking the King who died on a cross, yet who lived again. And after many days he chanced upon a hermit, dwelling with the wolves in the rocks. And him he asked for aid to find the King of Kings.

"That will I give," the holy man replied; and then he told him of the Child that came to make men pure in heart; the Man that lived to teach men how to live; the Christ that died to free men from a hateful bondage.

"How shall I find this King?" he cried. "How shall I serve Him?"

"Seest thou that river?" asked the hermit. "The traveler shrinks back from its shore, affrighted at the rush of waters. Go thou down there and aid the weak against the stream. Thus shalt thou serve the King; nor seek Him further, yet in thy need, but call out in His name, and He will come."

Offero went upon his way, and built himself a hut of boughs beside the river. But in his heart he was cast down, for fain would he have seen his Lord, and served Him with mighty deeds of arms.

"For how shall one so strong as I need help?" he asked himself; "and must I then forever serve an unseen master?"

One night a storm beat fierce upon the hut and tore apart its sheltering boughs. And as the Giant stumbled to his feet, rubbing his half-closed eyes, the wind bore to him the piping of a little, childish voice:

"Offero, good Offero," it wailed. "Waken! and carry me across."

The wind bent the Giant, as a tree is bent, when he tried to stand against it. Yet foot by foot he groped on through the blackness to the shore, and when at last he stood upon it, a bolt of lightning broke the night asunder and showed a child struggling in the swirl of water. Offero plunged in boldly, and in his arms the little one was safe.

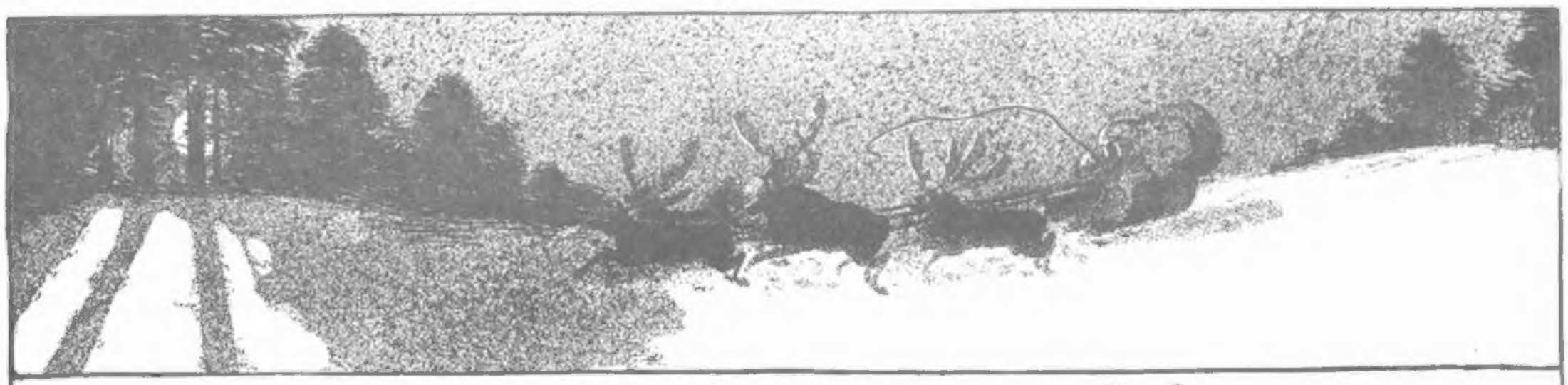
Step by step he battled on, his back unyielding to the waves, his stout limbs firm against the tangling eddies that circled all about, seeking to trip and throw him. And now the Child, at first as light as floating foam, grew heavy, until at last the Giant staggered neath the burden, and had fallen; but thought he of his unseen Master, and cried aloud on Him for help. And instantly there came new vigor to his straining muscles, and he stumbled safely to the shore.

"Whom have I borne across?" he cried, as from his tired arms the child slipped down. "Had I the world upon my shoulders, the weight had not been greater!"

Answered the Child, and His voice was sweet and low: "Thou hast borne Me upon thy shoulders, and for that men shall know thee as Christopher; but upon mine I have borne the sins of the world."

Then happened there a strange thing; for even as the Giant looked the Child was gone, and in the East a star burned through the thinning clouds. And clear came the refrain of a chanting host, "On earth peace, good-will toward men."

There on the ground knelt Christopher; for he knew that he had seen the King of Kings, before whom no man can stand.



The Origin of Christmas Customs

FORGOTTEN MEANINGS OF YULE-TIDE. By Edgar S. Nash

THERE are a few things in existence to-day which have not been changed or moulded in the hands of Progress. One by one legends and customs have been disproved and overthrown, yet none has dared attack the legends and the customs sacred to Christmas-tide. Here and there a savant has tried to prove that December 25th does not mark the birthday of Christ. Men and women read, smile, pass on.

The time of year corresponding to our Christmas-tide has always been a period of rejoicing. It marks the winter solstice. The days begin to lengthen, and the sun no longer journeys away from earth, but enters upon his return. It is a promise of renewed light and warmth, of the approach of the summer days, and men hailed these signs with every expression of gladness.

In Rome the Saturnalia, or feast of Saturn, fell at about the same time as our Christmas, and it marked the greatest festival of the Roman year. The city abandoned itself to gayety. Unbounded license held sway; universal mirth was the order of the day; friends feasted friends, and foes were reconciled. There were no slaves, no masters; all social distinctions were laid aside. Work was stopped throughout the city, and no war was ever entered upon at this time.

•

The tree as the emblem of life also [illegible] conspicuously in the earlier religions. [illegible]pt the palm tree put forth a new shoot [illegible] month, and at the time of the winter solstice it was the custom among the Egyptians to decorate the houses with a branch of palm bearing twelve shoots. In Rome the fir tree was regarded with veneration, and during the Saturnalian festivities the halls and houses were hung with evergreen boughs.

In England, in the days of the Druids, the houses were decked with evergreens in order that the sylvan spirits might repair to their grateful shelter and remain protected from the nipping frost and the icy winter winds.

Farther to the north the wild Teuton tribes worshiped their god in wooded places, and looked upon the fir tree as his sacred emblem. The period corresponding to the Roman Saturnalia was the festival of Thor. This festival, like the Roman feast, was given over to the most barbaric pleasures and the wildest forms of enjoyment. Among these peoples the festivity was known as Yule-tide.

•

When Christianity spread abroad, men knew that in the story of Christ's nativity was realized what they in their blindness had striven to typify. So they adapted the old customs of their ancestors to the new order of things.

Among Northern European tribes a great fir tree was set up in each household at Christmas-tide. At its base were placed representations of Adam and Eve; in the branches coiled the Serpent, and on the topmost bough gleamed a candle, symbolizing that Light of the World through whom alone was victory over the Serpent possible. Later in history the tree was more profusely decorated with gaudy knick-knacks, all of which were at first symbolical. But the children were not allowed to see the tree till Christmas morning.

To account for its appearance there, the parents used to tell the children a Chaldean legend. Years ago it was the custom for every Saxon household to burn the Yule log on Christmas Eve. This was a great, knarled root or tree-trunk, cut the day before Christmas and brought into the hall on Christmas Eve with great ceremony, and accompanied with music. Each member of the household would sing a Yule song, standing on the centre of the log.

Then an attempt was made to drive the Yule log into the great hall, as if it were a stubborn horse. The cry was given that the "dun" refused to move, and the whole company was summoned. All took a hand, and, with loud shouting, dragged it to the great fireplace. It was lighted with the charred remnant of the former year's log, which had been carefully preserved for this occasion, and which was supposed to insure the house against ill luck.

The children were told that during the night the Yule log gave birth to the Christmas tree which they found in the hall on Christmas morning loaded with gifts.

The Christmas tree was introduced into England by Prince Albert, consort of Queen Victoria. From the palace the custom spread, until now the Christmas tree is a necessary feature of an English Christmas.

•

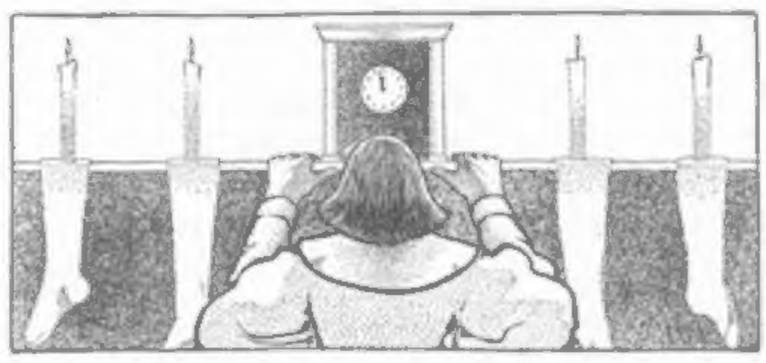
In Germany and other European countries it was believed by the children that the tree glittering with candles and bright baubles, and the gifts found beneath the tree, were the work of jolly old Saint Nicholas, Sant Nicholaus, or Santa Claus, as we know him. This kindly saint was no legendary character. He lived about 300 A. D., and was a noted Bishop of Asia Minor. He was looked upon as the patron saint of generosity because of his liberality.

Three daughters of a poor nobleman could not marry as advantageously as they should because their father could give them no dowry. But one night one of the daughters found in her room a purse, shaped like a stocking, filled with gold, evidently thrown in the window by some one from without. The next night the second daughter found a purse in her room, and on the third night the father caught Saint Nicholas in the act of throwing the third purse in the window.

From that story originated the custom of hanging up the stockings on Christmas Eve. Thereafter the young girls at the convent schools would hang their stockings on the door of the Mother Superior's room on Saint Nicholas night. On the following morning they would be found filled with gifts and dainties, and a little hint from Saint Nicholas as to the appearance and character of their future husbands.

Saint Nicholas is the patron saint of Russia, and his festival used to be celebrated earlier in December than the 25th, but now his name is synonymous with Christmas festivities. In parts of Europe he is known as "Pelsnichol," or Nicholas with the fur, because he is supposed to be clad in furs from head to foot.

The idea of Saint Nicholas traveling in a sleigh drawn by reindeer originated in the cold Northern countries. The reindeer were the swiftest animals known, and they must needs fly like the wind to carry Saint Nick the rounds of the world in one night.



In certain parts of Germany it was commonly held that on Christmas Eve the Christ-child,—Criss Kindlein, or Kriss Kingle,—visited earth, and, as He passed over the houses, dropped gifts through the roof for the deserving and the good.

But aside from the customs which relate to gifts and the spirit of giving at Christmas-tide, there are several observances which are indissolubly linked with this time.

•

Christmas is never Christmas without the holly wreath and the mistletoe. Christians venerated the holly, or holy tree, because to them the little thorny leaves and red berries made in a wreath typified the crown of thorns and the bloody drops. Doubtless they introduced this solemn reminder at the joyous festival in order not to forget the sacredness of the occasion in the general festivities.

The mistle bush, mistletod,—or mistletoe, as we know it,—owes its use as a festal decoration to pagan times. According to the Scandinavian legend, Baldur, the most beloved of all the gods, had a premonition that death impended. Thereupon, his mother, Frigga, besought everything that was begotten of earth, air, fire or water to swear not to harm her son.

But in her request she overlooked the insignificant little mistletoe. Loki, the god of destruction, disguised as an old woman, visited Frigga, and, learning of her oversight, hurried back to where the gods were assembled. There they were amusing themselves by hurling all manner of missiles at Baldur, and all were turned aside. But Loki, with an arrow made of mistletoe, pierced Baldur's heart.

In reparation, the mistletoe was given to Frigga to do as she saw fit, provided it touched not earth. And she, to show that she bore no ill will, hung it up, and every one who passed under it received a kiss as a token that, instead of hatred and jealousy, the mistletoe now stood for love and forgiveness.

•

Among the Celtic nations the mistletoe was an object of veneration, and at the festival of the winter solstice the Prince of the Druids himself cut a bough of it. The people were assembled, and then were led to the woods by the priests, who drove in advance of the company two snow-white bullocks. When the oak tree was found which bore the mistletoe, the plant was cut with a golden sickle, and the bullocks sacrificed.

At present it is the custom for the young men to carry out the doctrine taught by the Scandinavian myth and print a smacking kiss on the lips of any maiden thoughtless enough to stand beneath the suspended mistletoe bough. But for every such kiss one of the white berries of the mistletoe must be removed, and when all the berries have been kissed away the spell is broken.

•

Almost as important as the gift giving and gift receiving on Christmas Day is the feast of dainties spread on that festal occasion. But even the Christmas dinner has its origin in the dim, distant past. Feasts were always the accompaniment of any festival. In Egypt, at the winter solstice, every family killed and ate a goose as a religious observance.

In the hieroglyphic language of the Egyptian, the figure of a goose was the word "child." The people had noticed that the goose was remarkable for the way in which it protected its young, hence it was looked upon as the symbol of great love,—that love which is willing to sacrifice itself for the object of its affection. This trait was also believed to belong to the god they worshiped, so the Egyptians celebrated this festival by killing and eating a goose.

We preserve the custom of eating fowl on this day, but the toothsome turkey has more generally supplanted the goose. The plum pudding as a dish in the Christmas feast has its meaning. The number and richness of its ingredients represented the rich gifts which the Kings laid at the feet of the child Jesus.

In earlier days the mince pie, then a great pastry dish, filled with forced meat and fruits, was made box-shaped, to typify the manger in which the Child had lain.

•

The celebration of Christmas-tide is as old as the human race, and many of the customs have lost their origin in the hazy past. We preserve and hand down these customs because we respect their age. But pagan customs have survived in our Christian festival, not so much because of their age, as because it was necessary to preserve them.

When Christianity was in its infancy, men who embraced it refused to give up the old festivals, so in view of the great end to be obtained, the leaders of the early church allowed these customs and festivities to stand, but sought to put into them some Christian significance and meaning.

•

But to such strict sectarians as the Puritans and the Quakers in England the Christmas festivities appeared to be little better than pagan orgies. These worthy people thoroughly discountenanced the festival, and when the Quakers and Puritans came to found a State in the New World, they made rigid rules against any such form of festivity.

The Dutch colonists, however, were enthusiastic in their observance of Christmas-tide, and, though far from home, they celebrated the happy time in the old way. From the Dutch colonists in America spread the Christmas cheer, and the frowns and resolutions of the staid Puritan and Quaker colonists availed nothing against the infectious spirit of Christmas cheer and good-will which the Dutch brought into the new country.

SEND YOUR CABINET PHOTO, AND GET
12 Petit Photos for 25 Cents, Silver
Send 2-cent stamp for postage. AGENTS WANTED.
PETIT PHOTO COMPANY, 112 E. Gilmore Street, Baltimore, Md.

EXTRA PAY can be earned evenings by giving Stereopticon Exhibitions. Little capital needed. Full particulars and [illegible] Catalogue, free.
McALLISTER, Mfg. Opticia[illegible], 49 Nassau Street, New York

MUSIC TAUGHT SELF-
Prof. Rice's Self-Teaching System
All can Learn Music without a teacher. Rapid, Correct. Notes, Chords, Accompaniments, Harmony. Established 12 years. 10 Lessons, 50 cents. Circulars Free.
U. S. RICE MUSIC CO., 161 Wabash Avenue, CHICAGO, ILL.

HOLD YOUR SCARF

with the Improved Washburne Patent Scarf Fastener. Useful also for fastening papers or any articles. 10 cents each, by mail. Hose Supporters that do not bind the leg nor injure the fabric. By mail, 25 cents a pair.
Illustrated Catalogue of these and other novelties, free.
AMERICAN RING CO.
Box 54, Waterbury, Conn.

"PUBLICK OCCURRENCES" THAT ARE MAKING HISTORY

American Cotton Belt Moving Steadily Westward

Within a period of twenty years the cotton belt of the United States has shifted westward with a speed and strength that would seem incredible were not abundant facts in proof. Two decades ago the bulk of our cotton was grown in States east of the Mississippi River; to-day, fully seven-tenths of the entire cotton crop is raised beyond that river.

Formerly the cotton belt was popularly supposed to extend only through the best lands of Virginia, Georgia, the Carolinas, and the edges of adjoining States. In the crop year of 1896-7 the largest production was in Texas,—2,122,701 bales. Mississippi, with 1,201,000 bales, was only about 98,000 bales below Georgia, which ranked second in production.

Arkansas exceeded North Carolina, and had a crop equal to two-thirds of South Carolina; and Louisiana, the State of sugar and rice, was also ahead of North Carolina, and within 38,000 bales of Arkansas. The Indian Territory, Missouri, Oklahoma, Utah and Kansas also are now in the list of cotton-producing States and Territories.

It is now known that cotton can be raised successfully in nearly one-third of our entire territory, and the 20,000,000 acres already under cultivation form a small tract of the available cotton soil.

The United States Gaining First Trade Place in Japan

During the year 1897 the United States exceeded all other countries in exports to and imports from Japan in seventeen of the great commodities of export and sixteen of import. The chief competitors of the United States were Great Britain in general trade, and France in silk.

Although Great Britain laid the foundation of the railway system of Japan, the United States has outdistanced her in maintaining and developing it. In 1895 the value of locomotives exported by Great Britain was more than double that of those sent from this country; but last year the record changed to $899,130 for Great Britain, and showed $1,191,906 for the United States.

Again, in 1895, Great Britain furnished nearly all the railroad iron imported into Japan. The following year this country supplied about one-sixth as much as the English export; but during last year Japanese takings from Great Britain aggregated $810,110, and from the United States $615,018. Present indications are that 1898 will place the United States far ahead of Great Britain in this line also.

Cuban Patriots Want Pay for Their Services in the War With Spain

The Cuban Military Assembly, held in Santa Cruz del Sur, in the middle of November, appointed a commission of five members, headed by the veteran General Calixto Garcia, to proceed to the United States and make certain representations to President McKinley.

This commission was instructed to express the thanks of the Cubans to the American Congress for its sympathetic resolutions of April last, and to offer the Government the support of all classes of Cuban revolutionary supporters.

Another instruction reveals the secret of the whole movement, and has quite a familiar ring about it. Unless required to assist the Americans in preserving order, the time for the Cuban armies to disband has arrived; but it would be a hardship to disband them without payment for their services.

Hence, the real purpose of the commission is to induce the United States to provide, by taxation in Cuba, sufficient funds to pay the Cubans for their work in trying to secure their own freedom.

Why the Province of Newfoundland Kept Out of the Dominion of Canada

Why the Province of Newfoundland has maintained a political existence wholly separate from and independent of the Dominion of Canada has been a matter of more or less mystery ever since the Dominion was established.

When the movement for a union of the Canadian Provinces was in progress, it was distinctly understood that the home Government would assume payment of a part of the provincial debts, and the new Dominion Government would be responsible for the balance.

Newfoundland had rolled up a considerable debt for railroad construction and other internal improvements, and the proportion of the per capita of the debt was larger than that of the other provinces. Objections, therefore, were raised against her joining the Dominion.

In 1895, Newfoundland sought admission, but the Dominion declined to assume the debt of the Province, which was financially unable to meet all its obligations, and, through disastrous fires and commercial and banking panics, was on the verge of bankruptcy. Now the Province is in much better shape, and her union with the Dominion is being urged by powerful influences.

New York Becoming the World's First Seaport

London has long held the record of being the first seaport in the world, but that distinction has nearly reached New York.

Taking official reports in both countries, it appears that, in 1897, the combined entries and clearances of vessels in the foreign trade at London aggregated 15,797,659 tons, and that in the year ending June 30, 1898, the aggregate at New York was 15,343,242 tons. These totals indicated an increase in a year of 215,000 tons at London, and 1,131,727 tons at New York. If a fair average gain is kept up at both ports, the end of the current fiscal year, June 30, 1899, will find New York far ahead of London.

Finding 2500 Square Miles of New Territory in Alaska

An important feature of the work of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey in Alaska, last summer, was the discovery that the Territory is considerably larger than had previously been supposed. The new "find" is in the vicinity of the mouth of the Kusilvak, in Bering Sea.

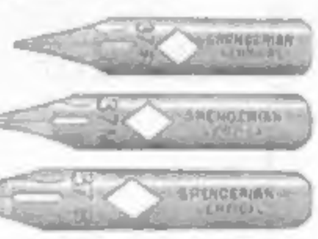
This Kusilvak channel is now found to extend nearly parallel with the shore to a point about midway to the Krypniak, when it turns seaward and spreads out into a bar with eight feet of water over it at low tide.

The shores at its mouth extend twenty-five miles farther into Bering Sea than the present charts indicate, giving to the Territory an additional area of 2500 square miles.

Spencerian Pens

New Series No. 37

See That Hole?



That is for inserting a pointed instrument to eject the pen from the holder, and to prevent the ink from flowing back on the pen and soiling the fingers.

Samples on receipt of return postage. ASK FOR VERTICAL No. 37.

SPENCERIAN PEN COMPANY
450 Broome Street, New York

FOR XMAS PRESENTS

"Huylers EVERY TIME"

JUSTLY CELEBRATED BONBONS CHOCOLATES

Large Assortment of Fancy Boxes and Baskets

By mail or express.

863 Broadway New York

SEND 1, 2, 3 or 5 Dollars, and Candies will be packed and shipped any desired date.

SINGER National Costume Series

SWITZERLAND (Vaud)

The Canton of Vaud is a favorite resort for the tourist attracted by the beauties of Lake Geneva and the historical associations of the Castle of Chillon. He finds himself among grand mountains, in rich, fertile valleys, where agriculture is the chief industry, and where the people are modest, industrious farm owners, generally well educated.

The photograph represents a characteristic group of the native Swiss in Vaud. It shows the simplicity of the dress generally worn by the women—a plain skirt and bodice, with blouse and apron of spotless white lawn. Their heads are covered with either a bonnet or cap of dark silk when indoors, but in the open air a broad-brimmed hat is worn.

The Singer trade-mark is well known in Switzerland, and sewing machines carrying this mark are to be found in the majority of Swiss cottages. This popularity is due not only to the superior excellence of these machines, but also to the liberal terms on which they may be purchased.

Sold on Instalments. You can try one FREE. Old Machines taken in Exchange

THE SINGER MANUFACTURING COMPANY
Offices in Every City in the World

Best 50-Cent Music Folios

Of their Kind in the World

Contain Only Latest Copyrighted Successes

The Witmark Mandolin and Guitar Folios, Nos. 1 and 2. Arranged by T. P. Trinkaus. 72 pages, sheet-music size, each part separate (complete), 50c. Second Mandolin Parts, 25c. to this Folio, published in Book Form, 25c.

The Witmark Banjo Folios, Nos. 1 and 2. Arranged by G. L. Lansing. 72 pages, sheet-music size, 50c.

The Witmark Guitar Folios, Nos. 1 and 2. Arranged by T. P. Trinkaus. 72 pages, sheet-music size, 50c.

The Witmark Mandolin and Piano Folios, Nos. 1 and 2. By the best arrangers. 72 pages, sheet-music size, 50c.

The Witmark Zither Folio, No. 1. Arranged by E. Rueffer. 48 pages, sheet-music size, 50c.

The Witmark Collection of Male Quartettes, No. 1. Arranged by Chas. Shattuck. 32 pages of compiled song hits, 50c.

Excellent Quartettes on the Witmark Popular Productions. Arranged by Chas. Shattuck. Containing Coons, Ballads, Medleys, etc., for male voices. 50c.

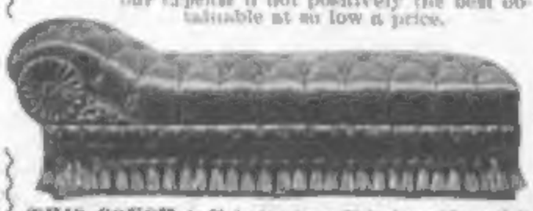
SENT, POSTPAID, ON RECEIPT OF PRICE

M. WITMARK & SONS, 10 West 29th St., New York City

Direct from the Factory

Turkish Couch

$29.50 buys this luxurious Turkish leather couch, direct from the factory, freight prepaid, sent "On Approval," to be returned at our expense if not positively the best obtainable at so low a price.



THIS COUCH is 75 inches long, 28 inches wide, and is made of best quality of machine-buffed genuine leather (no imitation), and all cushions are genuine curled horsehair. It has finest steel springs, spring edge, ball bearing casters and diamond-tufted top. This couch, at retail, will cost $45 to $60.

We Prepay Freight to all points east of the Mississippi and north of South Carolina. (Points beyond on an equal basis.)

Write for our Complete Catalogue

THE FRED MACEY CO., Grand Rapids, Mich.
Makers of Office and Library Furniture

Direct from the Factory